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THE MOBILE ENTERTAINER'S MAGAZINE

ISSUE 130 SEPTEMBER 2010

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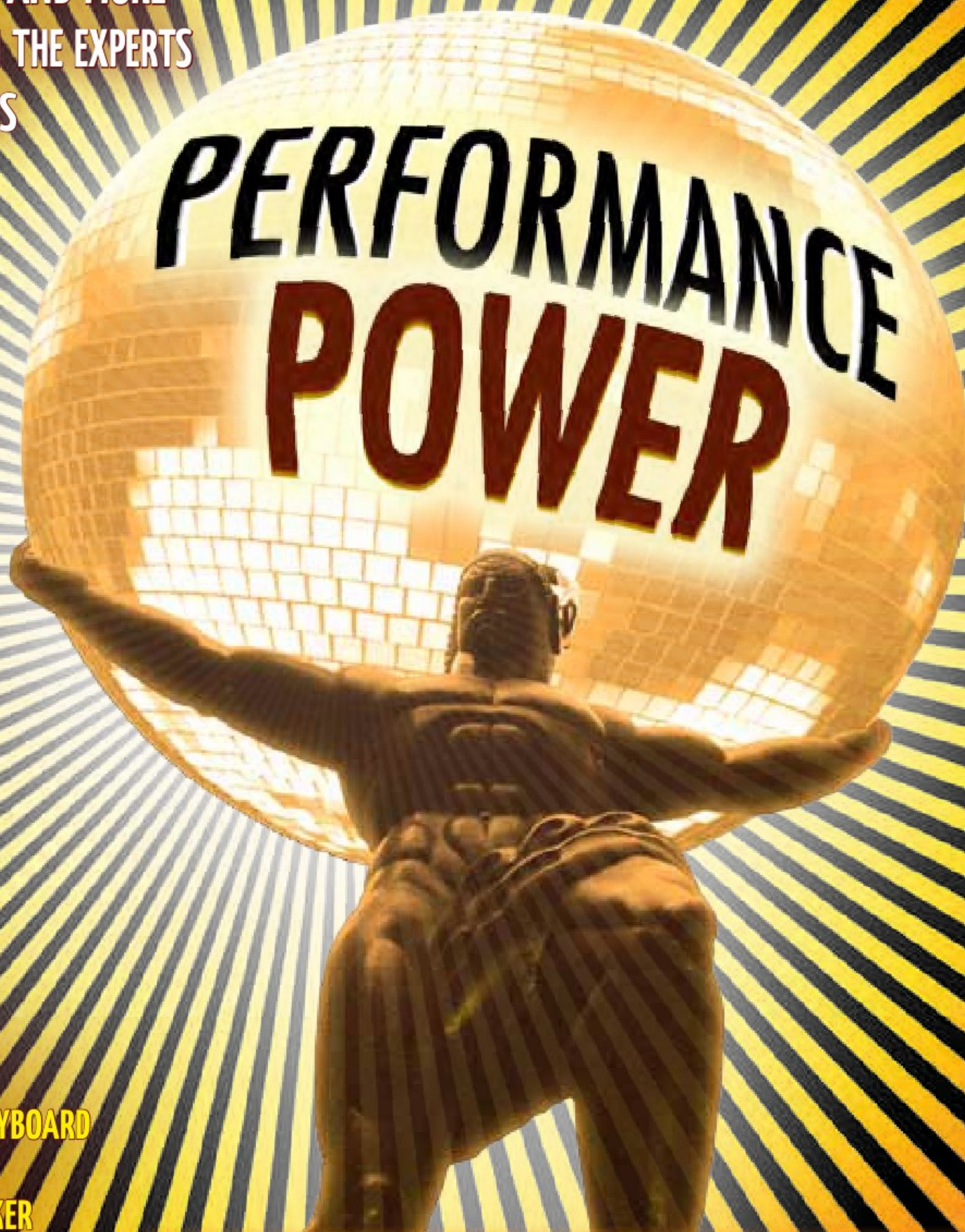
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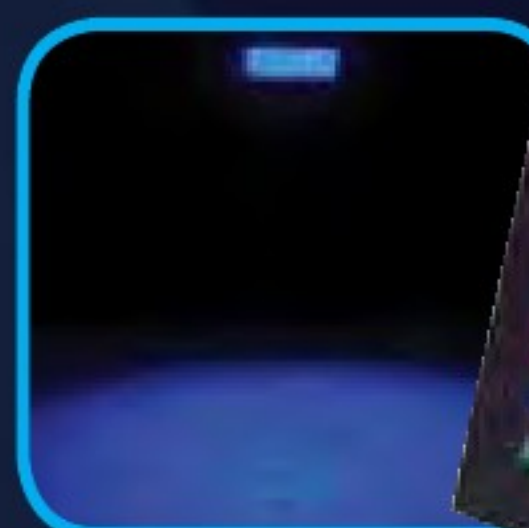
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The Power Authority

The original theme of this issue was "Performance Potpourri," mainly because we expected to be presenting a bunch of different ideas about performing, ideas that wouldn't necessarily have anything else in common. Potpourri is a fragrant blend of dried flower petals, a mixture designed to bring freshness to a room. This selection of articles certainly brings you a fresh perspective on a number of different performance-related subjects.

However, as the issue took shape, I began to see another pattern within the variety. Besides the technical aspects of performing in different contexts, the stories all pointed to a deeper need all DJs have. Power.

In entertainment, we say something is powerful when it moves our emotions and lifts us out of our everyday existence for a moment. One recent example that comes to mind is the incredible performance of ten-year-old singer Jackie Evancho on America's Got Talent. When a very mature-sounding operatic



voice came forth from this little lady, viewers across the nation were moved by the power of musical beauty and sheer surprise.

One thing that *MB* writers touch on over and over is the idea that DJs, especially those specializing in weddings, mitzvahs, quinceañeras, etc, have this same responsibility every week, year in, year out: the responsibility to lift clients and

their guests out of the everyday and into a moment that may become a treasured memory. It may not be on a nationally televised stage, but for the dozens or hundreds of people in attendance, it's just as, or maybe a lot more important.

So, true professionals need to have what it takes to bring a powerful experience to their audiences. That's where we come in, as, dare I say, your "power authority." I feel justified in making such a grandiose comparison, because what we offer in these pages, at our DJ web portal, and at our conferences is nothing short of high-octane fuel to help you drive to high and higher levels of performance. We supercharge your own hard-won experience with the combined wisdom of our expert writers and seminar speakers, giving you knowledge that you can transform into better performing, and ultimately greater personal prosperity.

Specifically, in this issue we provide you with power tools for: tuning up your grand entrances and overall wedding reception planning; taking your bar/bat mitzvah business to the next level; mastering the difficult tightrope walks of today's youth events; getting in better shape in order to better serve your clients; accessing the power of word-of-mouth marketing; plus a whole lot more.

With a nod to Randy Bartlett's 1% Solution concept, think about it: Where else can you get so much benefit for your DJ career from so little—simply lifting and turning some pages? Nowhere else will you find as much fuel to energize your mobile entertainment than in these pages, at MobileBeat.Com, and in our conference seminar programs. For mobile DJs we are THE power authority.

— Dan Walsh, Editor-In-Chief

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MBLVXX UPDATE

MBLVXX 1991-2011
Celebrating 20 years of Mobile Beat

"WORTHMEISTER" ON BOARD WITH OPENING DAY PRESENTATION

Mobile Beat Hall of Famer Mark Ferrell, who is credited with raising DJ professionalism and the Mobile Beat Shows to a higher plane, will make his first Mobile Beat speaking appearance since 2003 on Tuesday afternoon, February 1. As



Show Producer Mike Buonaccorso tells it, "Before Mark's presentation at the 2000 Las Vegas show, DJ seminars were mostly made up of panels of three or four

individuals with little preparation beforehand. I guess that reflects on my own learning curve for the first three years of putting shows together. Now almost



all seminars are solo, by presenters with proven expertise in their subject areas."

Ferrell joins previously announced former WWF wrestler Ted DiBiase, presenting the keynote, "Champion in Any Field," and many other presenters speaking on relevant topics, such as mic technique, school dances, consultation skills, and much, much more.

MOBILE BEAT TO ROCK THE RIV...

...And when we say "rock," this year we really mean ROCK. On Wednesday evening of the show (Feb. 2), at the Top of the Riv, the American Disc Jockey Association and NLFX Professional will present none other than the hard rockin' Warrant. A fixture of '80s and 90's stadium rock, the band includes original members Joey Allen, Erik Turner, Jerry Dixon and Steven Sweet, plus lead singer Robert Mason.



They will perform their mega hits: "Cherry Pie," "Heaven," "Down Boys," "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and others.

A lot more entertainment is also in the works. Look for announcements at MobileBeat.Com, as acts and events are confirmed.

SHOW INFO

For the latest news on MBLVXX visit www.mobilebeat.com

MBLVXX, the Mobile Beat DJ Show and Conference for 2011, celebrating 20 (XX) years of *Mobile Beat Magazine*, runs February 1st through February 3rd, 2011 (with pre-show events on January 31st). MBLVXX provides an opportunity to

check out the latest gear and business-building products and services, learn from the best and brightest the industry has to offer, network with peers, party in classic Vegas style, and get the hottest deals on essential DJ technology.

THE HIPPEST TRIP ARRIVES ON DISC

Time Life is commemorating the 40th anniversary of *Soul Train* with *The Best of Soul Train*, a 3-DVD boxed set released on August 31. During its heyday (1971-1979), the weekly TV show was a national showcase for the latest names in soul music, outrageous fashion, and hip dances.

The discs present an amazing collection of performances from the show's archives, many of which haven't been seen

in over 30 years, including exclusive performances from by The Jackson Five, Marvin Gaye, The O'Jays, Smokey Robinson, Aretha Franklin, Stevie Wonder, Sly & The Family Stone and more.

Altogether, 50 performances are covered in eight hours of footage, including more than three hours of bonus material.

"Time Life is proud to bring back one of the most enduring and culturally relevant shows in television history with The

Best of Soul Train," says Michael Mitchell, Time Life VP for Marketing/Strategic Partnerships.

Soul Train founder Don Cornelius says, "We're extremely proud of Soul Train's innovative history and legacy, and we look forward to sharing this with multiple generations to come... As always: Love, Peace and Soul!"

Go to www.TimeLife.com/SoulTrain for a complete play list. **MB**

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Accentuate the Positive...

...AND ELIMINATE THE NEGATIVE BY REACTING CREATIVELY

BY MIKE FICHER •

In 1945, Dean Martin met a young comic named Jerry Lewis at the Glass Hat Club in New York, where both men were performing. The duo connected and decided to form an act. Martin and Lewis's official debut, though, at Atlantic City's 500 Club on July 24, 1946, was, to be generous, a bomb.

The owner, one Skinny D'Amato, warned them that if they didn't come up with a better act for their second show later that same night, they would be fired. Huddling in the alley behind the club, Lewis and Martin agreed to abandon their poorly-received, scripted gags and improvise their way through the act. Martin sang some songs, and Lewis dressed as a busboy, dropping plates and more or less making a shambles of both Martin's performance and the club's sense of decorum. The combination of slapstick, old vaudeville jokes, and whatever else popped into their heads at the moment struck a chord, sending the audience into fits of laughter. A legendary comedy duo was born.

RIDERS ON THE STORM

What do you do when the bit, song or game does not generate energy or a positive response? Do you panic? Do you have "go-to" songs and bits? Do you maintain a composed, confident presence?

It's been said that the true test of a captain's mettle and acumen is not when the seas are calm and the skies friendly, but when the water is ferocious, the air turbulent and the equipment faulty. Therefore, shouldn't the real test of a mobile entertainer's abilities be when the floor is empty, the guests are listless, and the general energy of the party at low ebb?

Martin & Lewis provide just one interesting example of entertainers who have demonstrated that often the first step toward success comes through adversity calling them to respond creatively. What do you do when handed lemons?

A NEW ATTITUDE

One of the most positive ways to deal with negative performance situations is attitude. Often, from the ashes of discontent rises the phoenix of memories.

"I see 'bombing' as an opportunity for greatness," says Matt

Bixby, owner/operator of Matt's Entertainment, serving the Willamette Valley in northern Oregon and southern Washington. "I've tried to embody Johnny

Carson's 'I'm even funnier when the jokes are terrible' mindset. Oh, how I loved the gleam he'd get in his eye when the show was not proceeding according to plan."

Can you laugh at yourself if a bit or song does not work and quickly recover with another better song, bit or game? If the audience senses your panic or overt concern, they may reflect that in their response. If the audience sees and hears a light-hearted, pragmatic response, they may be more willing and able to revive the event's energy. Usually the audience will take their cue for the mood of the event from the entertainer's tone—so don't panic, do not dwell, and move forward.

PEOPLE GET READY

Preparation is an excellent servant when negative performance issues arise. Do you have other bits in your arsenal? If a game does not work, do you have another that might generate more success? Or, are you prepared to accept the even more drastic possibility that games will not work that night and that another entertainment vehicle is needed?

Entertainers with numerous vehicles in their performance fleet have a better chance for adjusting to situations than one-trick ponies. Gaining comfort with numerous activities—raffles, dance instruction, games, storytelling, comic bits—will increase the chance that you will have something attractive for your audience. Become a more versatile, polished entertainer through education, study and rehearsal.

LET'S DANCE!

If a crowd is reluctant to journey to the dance floor, do you have gimmicks or persuasive ideas that might entice them? An assistant, particularly one of the opposite sex, is helpful to encourage the crowd to journey to the floor.

Or, if they are tapping their toes and engaged in conversation, is your ego comfortable shifting to a more supportive, background music palette? Maybe the situation is not negative, just different than you or the organizer expected. What entertainer has not encountered an event where the expectations were high for dancing, but the floor remained tranquil...and yet guests shared that they had a great time afterward and enjoyed the music?

An association meeting is a supportive environment in which to share war stories about successes and struggles. Take a cue from your comrades in arms and adopt any of their ideas that might help you add to your arsenal of entertainment weaponry. Seize every opportunity to be better prepared to generate guest satisfaction at your next event, no matter what circumstances bombard you with.

Mobile entertainers are not alone facing challenging performance situations. The greatest of entertainers, Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis, turned one into ong, prosperous, fruitful careers. What will you do with your next difficult situation? **MB**



Mobile DJ, dance instructor, emcee, voice actor, writer, teacher, and improv comedian, Mike Ficher owns and operates Dance Express, based in Bend, Oregon. A three-time presenter and host at Mobile Beat conventions, Mike has been expanding the public's definition of mobile entertainer since 1986.



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WHY PLASTIC CAN BE FANTASTIC

BY JOHN HUBELA •



Your phone rings. It's a hot prospect with a DJ emergency. Their "DJ-nephew" broke his arm skateboarding and can't do their engagement party. After some quick Q & A you close the deal with the following: "Why not secure my service right now with your credit card?" By making it easy to do business, you've turned this prospect into a client.

The economic environment and credit crunch notwithstanding, consumers are still in love with the convenience and rewards points they get when they use their credit and debit cards.

Often, a bride will dedicate a specific card to wedding expenses or may want to use Daddy's card. Make it easy for her. Cut through the corporate red tape by accepting corporate clients' cards instead of waiting for a check. That faster cash flow is literally "money in the bank" for you.

THE PROCESS

To get started, you need to engage a card processor. This could be your bank or any of the various independent processors (so-called ISOs). None of the latter actually do the processing themselves but use "back of the house" biggies such as First Data, Paymentech or Global. There's a myriad of plans available, so due diligence is required on your part to make the best choice for your business. Consider your dollar volume, amount of activity and how you engage your clients—house calls vs. your office vs. phone/online—to help determine what makes sense for you.

SWIPING

We're all familiar with the typical credit card terminal used at retail stores; however, this is just one of the various modalities used to capture the customer card information. A more effective way for mobile entrepreneurs may be to employ a wireless terminal, online "virtual terminal" or the recently introduced smart phone-based "terminal." Of course, there is a cost associated with any setup: Either you pay for the "equipment" outright, or in the guise of higher rates and fees.

FEES, RATES AND BENEFITS

There are, of course, fees associated with any processor and format you choose. Some of these are unavoidable. But you should try to negotiate a program without monthly, annual, or minimum processing fees; these recurring fees will bite you in your off season. Expect

to pay a percentage of the charge to the processor. The rate usually ranges between 2.00% to 3.50%, depending on the card issuer and type of card the customer uses. Typically, there's a "per transaction" fee (i.e., 25 cents per item

processed). In the DJ world, where many of the transactions are "card not present" (the customer's card does not get physically "swiped" because it was given by phone or email), the higher risk of fraud means increased cost to you in fees or rates.

The banks issue Visa and MasterCard and the rates vary according to the type of card. For example, the base rate may be 2.15% but if it's a rewards, points, corporate or one of the hundreds of "special benefits" cards, you'll get hit with an additional percentage that can push the actual rate closer to 3.50% (and I've seen higher—ouch!). The others: American Express Card (corporations love 'em) charges 3.50%; Discover Card rates tend to be in the 2.25% range. And a word about PayPal: At last check, their rate is high and the funding takes 5 days.

SHOW ME THE MONEY

Cash flow, the life blood of any business is always a factor. Your bank may offer "next day funding" that means money from the card transaction hits your account in 24 hours. Otherwise, for Visa and MasterCard, it's usually two business days, while Amex is three or four days.

Whether they're credit or debit cards, accepting them has never been easier for the professional. Although there are costs involved, the opportunities for easier closing of business, quicker cash flow, and the professional image created can be well worth it. **ME**

Mobile Money Machine

DJs often accept payment at the venue, the same night they perform. This can lead to hassles due to the limitations of dealing with cash and check payments only. With PAYware Mobile, DJs with iPhones can add credit cards to their on-the-spot payment options. They simply have the client swipe their credit card on this reader built for the iPhone 3G/3Gs. The built-in stylus makes it easy to sign, and the option to digitally send a receipt ensures a smooth, complete transaction. Using the VeriShield Protect system, the payment is secure and encrypted on both ends. The gateway system also gives DJs the option to track their income, with up-to-date transaction summaries housed in one easy to access system. PAYware Mobile is the ultimate solution for DJs looking for a simple and efficient way to accept payments. The PAYware Mobile app is available for free at iTunes. There is a \$49 sign up fee for the service and the PAYware Mobile hardware is free with a 2-year gateway service agreement. www.paywaremobile.com



John Hubela operates a NYC disc jockey company and has worked in the credit card processing business. If you have further questions about credit card processing for your DJ business, email John at john.hubela@gmail.com.



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Where Are the Leverage Points?

USING SPECIFIERS AND INFLUENCERS TO DRIVE REFERRALS

BY JOHN STIERNBERG •

Last issue we talked about generating referrals. Remember those four “referability skills?” Assuming that you 1) show up on time, 2) do what you say you are going to do, 3) finish what you start, and 4) say please and thank you, you are referable.

But WHO can verify this and advocate for you? Can you target and incentivize those people to help you drive referrals? Where is the leverage point? This article goes deeper into referral generation and suggests three action tips for success.

SPECIFIERS VS. INFLUENCERS

In any business, there are customers, specifiers, and influencers. The customers are the ones who write the checks—where the money changes hands. Specifiers are the people who make a recommendation to hire you, but do not pay. Influencers also make recommendations, and serve as catalysts for the sale through their relationship with the paying customers. Let’s break it down by the categories that you used to code the sources your past gigs (from the July 2010 issue of Mobile Beat):

- **Prior/returning client. (Specifier)**
- **Referral from prior client. (Influencer)**
- **Referral from audience member—someone who attended one of your shows but was not the client. (Influencer)**
- **Click through or phone call triggered by web search or directory listing. (Random)**
- **Via booking agent or professional event planner. (Specifier)**

Putting this in context, returning clients and audience members are influencers. They can help you by recommending you and giving your contact information to a prospective customer. Booking agents and event planners are specifiers. They go the extra step of handling sales and administration of the gig, not just being a positive reference.

WHERE IS THE LEVERAGE?

The concept of leverage is pretty simple: one relationship that can yield numerous future gigs. Here is an example. While some individuals get married multiple times (and may come back to you if they had a good experience when you performed at their first

wedding), you can’t really count on that business in the future. But you can (for example) use those relationships to get future business from their friends and relatives. This is why it is so important to follow up after the gig and keep in touch with EVERY past customer—even if it is unlikely that they will hire you again soon.

The situation is similar with booking agents and event planners. Once you have established a solid working relationship, an agent or planner can be the source of many future gigs. In addition, each customer that they bring you expands your “influencer” group. Things snowball over time. This is why it is so important to cultivate BOTH specifiers and influencers, not just one or the other.

In the real estate world, the expression goes “Everyone is either a buyer or a seller.” This motivates realtors (analogy: your sales team) to approach every business and personal relationship in terms of its sales potential. You can think of your customers, audiences, and business team in the same way.

HOW TO LEVERAGE SPECIFIERS AND INFLUENCERS

The business challenge is to stay in touch and incentivize both specifiers and influencers in a systematic way. Here are three suggestions:

Action Tip 1. Understand what motivates specifiers and influencers to send business your way. They each think differently. Specifiers have their own commercial objectives including fees and commissions. Influencers want to feel like they helped a friend (either you or whomever they are referring you to). Instead of cash, they may enjoy a free t-shirt or a Starbucks gift card.

Action Tip 2. Build time and money into your sales plan to devote to specifier and influencer relations. Examples include your e-mail newsletter, budget for commissions and fees, and personalized thank you gifts that you send 30 days after each show.

Action Tip 3: Build an online community. Develop followers on Twitter and fans on Facebook. Encourage all audience members to sign up for your e-mail list. Create a blog on your website where satisfied clients can post testimonials. The more opportunities for connection and involvement that you provide, the more likely you are to 1) get referrals and 2) lock out competitors.

HERE’S THE POINT...

Using your database of past customers, you can build deeper relationships and better referrals by determining which ones are specifiers and which ones are influencers. Systematic implementation of the Action Tips is important: 1) understand their motivation to help you, 2) include time and funds in your marketing plan, and 3) continue to build your online community over the long haul.

Next issue we’ll talk about the different brand messages you should use with specifiers, customers and influencers. In the meantime, best wishes for continued success in mobile entertainment! **MB**



John Stiernberg is founder of Stiernberg Consulting (www.stiernberg.com). His book **Succeeding In Music: Business Chops for Performers and Songwriters** is published by Hal Leonard Books. Contact John via e-mail at john@stiernberg.com. You can find John on LinkedIn, Plaxo, and Facebook and follow him on Twitter.

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Games: The Art of the Up-Sell

IT'S GOOD TO HAVE OPTIONS

BY ROB JOHNSON •

There are all sorts of ways to make money in our awesome industry. All you have to do is match your skills, your options and your interests with your market and what your customers are looking for. As I have said many times in previous columns, **KNOW YOUR MARKET.**

Games, both game shows and interactive games, are not for everyone. But when performed correctly they can be a lot of fun and great income generators. And there is more than one way to promote game offerings. One of the questions I get the most often is regarding so-called "up-sells." Is it best to add these options on to current events that are booked? Is it best to sell interactive games on their own merit? The answer is simple. YES!

Many times I have used my extensive selection of interactive games and game show options to seal the deal when clients thought they were looking for "just a DJ." I offer them something my competition doesn't. I also regularly book events that are specifically looking for what I offer. I have then been able to "up-sell" my DJ services. I have found that it is best not to limit myself.

Many of you are doing your own versions of game shows and interactive games. I believe the current technology and price points are the best the industry has ever seen (and I'm not just talking about DigiGames products). Now could be the time to add something new to your arsenal of options. You know how much money there is to

be made. With all of the competition out there it is imperative to set yourself apart from others. What do you do that they don't? What can you offer that they can't? Answer these questions and your customers will notice. They want the best options; so find a way to be a best option. If you offer basically the same options as a hundred other DJs in your market, PRICE will become the factor. Don't let price dictate what you do. YOU should dictate your market.

As I mentioned in my last article, photo booths are a current trend. Every week people spend more money on photo booths and other add-ons than a lot of DJs charge for their regular services. Why? Because that is what they VALUE. Some DJs are offended by this. I've embraced it, and now I am endorsing Atlanta Photo Booths as a great money-maker. Why be offended that clients will pay \$1,000 for a photo booth? Why not be the one charging them? Find what YOUR CLIENTS value and fill that need. Don't let your market dictate your business plan, let your business plan dictate how you make money. The mobile entertainment industry has grown and will continue to grow at a rapid rate. Make sure you stay ahead of the pack and you will put yourself in a position to succeed.

I applaud those DJs who command top dollar for their DJ services alone. It is not an easy thing to do. But add-ons and up-sells can make a real difference for your bottom line. Good luck as you search for a new way to wow your market...and keep playing games! **WE**



Rob Johnson has hosted trivia parties and game shows for more than a decade. He is the spokesperson for DigiGames and uses their equipment exclusively. He has performed throughout the United States, Europe and the Caribbean. He has also presented his "Midweek Money" seminar at

multiple conferences and conventions, including Mobile Beat and ADJA events. If you would like Rob to speak at your event or demonstrate DigiGames gear, contact him at 701-710-1657 rob@digigames.com.

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Renovating the "Y.M.C.A." Year After Year

THE VILLAGE PEOPLE KEEP ON BRINGING THE FEEL-GOOD DISCO VIBE TO NEW GENERATIONS

Now in their third decade, the Village People, the iconic group of the disco era, continue performing a full schedule of fairs, festivals, college gigs, public concerts and casino engagements throughout the United States and around the world.

Best known to DJs for the infectious and indispensable dance floor-filler, "Y.M.C.A." they continue to spread the feel-good disco vibe to new generations. Highlighting the ubiquitous nature of that song, the Guinness Book of World Records has certified that the world's largest "Y.M.C.A." dance, with over 40,000 fans "doing the 'Y.M.C.A.' moves" occurred while the group performed at the Sun Bowl in El Paso, Texas on December 31, 2008.

The group originated when producer/composer Jacques Morali, with partner Henri Belolo, found Felipe Rose dancing in his Indian costume in a crowd in New York's Greenwich Village. Felipe's special visual attraction inspired the idea of putting together a group of Village icons from various American social groups. After discovering and auditioning the other members, the Village People took shape.

Hitting the pop scene at just the right time for audiences to surrender to their campy, extravagant disco concept, the Village People went on to sell more than 100 million recordings, with other hits including "Macho Man," "In the Navy," "Go West" and more.

After a decade of touring and all-around pop stardom, the group took break in 1986, allowing some of the members to explore individual careers. Subsequently, as their own bosses and with the help of a new management team, the group has built ongoing success on live performances worldwide, television and video appearances, and exposure to new, young audiences as their music continues to be used in movies and elsewhere.

Mobile Beat: We've got Felipe Rose here, one of the original Village People. Felipe, tell us a little bit about yourself.

Felipe Rose: I'm the Native American Indian and co-founder of Village People and I've been with them I think going on 30 years. And just when you think things become the same old—same old, something always happens that brings a new situation and new life to the career of the group.

...In a nutshell, I guess I was in the right place at the right time, dancing in New York. And I was a struggling artist doing my singing lessons and my dance lessons and dancing in clubs in New York to bring in income. And when you're on a scholarship with, say, a dance company, pretty much your dance classes are free; but you have to use your means to support yourself.

And so I was in the right place at the right time when this producer [Jacques Morali] approached me with the idea of putting the group together. But at the time that he did that, it was late, and I thought, "Oh, this is another kooky person talking out of his you-know-what." And I decided to just ignore him. But...he just kept approaching me about it... So I asked an old DJ friend of mine about him...and he said, "No. He's really a producer."

And he actually gave me a song to go dance to, which was "Quiet Village" by the Ritchey Family. And it was really then that it crystallized in Jacques Morali's mind what he really wanted to do. Because at first what he was trying to do was have me go in and lay down percussion, because when I would dance I had sleigh bells on my ankles. So I was a dancer/percussionist...

...Through auditions with the other characters, we kind of formulized and crystallized the group. And then we did the first album, San Francisco Hollywood, which was actually on the charts for well over 30 weeks at number one.

And...because the album was a situation where it paid homage to the gay lifestyles of San Francisco and Hollywood and Fire Island, that pretty much was the precursor of what the group really is known for. And when you really think about it today, the people that really go out dancing in clubs and the people that go to our concerts, they don't care about any of that stuff. But sadly, when we do interviews with straight media people, that's typically the first question that comes out of their mouth. And in a way it's a little insulting. It's almost like asking you, "How much money do you make?"

...This year I've decided that, since we're getting ready to leave for Madrid and getting ready to do concerts around the world, that I'm going to be more steadfast with the media. And when they come out with stupid questions like that I'm just going to



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simply say, "I'm not here to discuss that. I'm here to discuss the music and being an entertainer, because my personal life really is none of your business."

...It's sad because they try to dispel what the group really is and you can't dispel that... Okay, we haven't had a hit, say, in over almost 30 years. But the fact that we're still touring the world at over 30 years tells you that, you know, the show's good!

MB: Yes. I've seen your show.

FR: But Donna Summer's out there too. Gloria Gaynor's out there. So there are a few of us—KC and the Sunshine Band—there are a few of us that because the music was great and was wonderful and kind of made its mark...And we plan a really good show and we give people what they want.

MB: It sounds like you really enjoy what you're doing and enjoy the people, the energy, the excitement, and the fun that they're having at your concerts.



FR: I really do. And I really take that and I use that as well to fuel my other passions. And I consider myself a renaissance man. I'm a writer. I'm a painter. I'm producing a TV culinary music show. I'm back in the studio recording yet another record, another CD. And I pretty much have already made a mark in the Native American contemporary music scene and have been inducted into the Native American Music Hall of Fame and have released music in that genre.

And so I use my position that I have to do other things. I do charities. I'm involved with charities with the group and as well as on an individual level as well. Like, a lot of my headdresses, when they get a little "long in the tooth,"...I take them and I sign them and I'll give them to a charity like breast cancer or something, or an AIDS charity...I give the headdresses up and they go up for silent auction and they raise a lot of money. And actually, when they write letters back they actually say, "You know, this was the highlight of the silent auction. And the person that bought it put the headdress on and did 'Y.M.C.A.'"

MB: Let's get back to the music a little bit. Your songs take a lot of people back to where they were and what they were doing at a certain point in their younger days. Maybe that's part of why you can still tour and why DJs still play your songs.

FR: ...YMCA," "Macho Man," "In the Navy," and a lot of our songs do that. But the thing is that because we're just a party band—and... we love saying that—because...there's a lot going on in the world today. And what we want to do is that when you come to see us, we want you to forget all of that and...really have a good time.

MB: It spreads. It feeds the enjoyment, the fun that's in the whole thing. I've experienced the same thing as a disc jockey at people's wedding receptions. You play that song—

FR: Oh, my god, are you serious? I actually had two brides

fight over me at a wedding reception that I was attending. And then the part of the evening when all the men go out and have cigars with the groom and the wedding party...I was out there, you know, I'm hanging with the guys smoking a cigar. And the DJ was at the other wedding and he's, "Oh, Felipe. Oh, my god. What are you doing here?" He's like, "Over here. Come on in. We're getting ready to do 'Y.M.C.A.'" And when I walked in there—and of course they were all actually putting on the hats—he made an announcement and I grabbed the microphone and started singing.

And next thing you know, the bride, who is a cousin of mine, she's walking in there, holding her dress, and she grabs the microphone, throws it on the floor, and pulls me by the arm. And then the other bride is pulling me. And my cousin yells out, "Get your own Indian!"...And I'm waving good-bye...kind of like a reality TV moment.

MB: Wild! Well, DJs can always count on "Y.M.C.A." to fill the floor. But to actually have one of the Village People leading it?! Amazing...

FR: I always make it a point to say hello to DJs, because without DJs where would the artists be? And the remixes that they do—I attended the Winter Music Conference for many years...I have that longstanding relationship for many years with DJs and I'm glad to be doing this interview with you.

MB: Well, you definitely are showing your appreciation for our art and what we do with continuing to play your music. You're still out there working it. You aren't just sitting back and collecting your royalty check or whatever.

FR: You know, the thing is that it is an art. And I'm glad that you said that because the thing is that I actually have been at studios where you can give a DJ just nothing but the audio file of just the vocals—the a cappella vocals—and to see what they do and how they reinterpret the song.

MB: Any other parting words for DJs at this point? Hopefully we'll get to see you at one of our conferences soon. But anything else you want to get out to the DJs that they should remember about you and/or the Village People?

FR: Well, again, the music. We just want to thank everybody, all the DJs, for keeping our music alive. I believe that as they keep it alive they help reintroduce it to people that are on the dance floor.

And now in my next album I'm recording...will be half contemporary music and half dance music...People can go to www.feliperose.com and listen to the award-winning music that I've written and produced. The record is called *Soul of a Man*. And I'm going to have some really nice, wonderful surprises. And we'll get some copies to DJs like you, and hopefully we can get something on the dance floor, you know?

MB: Let's get it out there...let's show some more of that energy that you guys are so well known for. You are also on Twitter at @felipevpnative, and on Facebook as Felipe Rose, correct? And people can go to www.OfficialVillagePeople.com for more on the overall band...And hopefully we'll get to meet you in person some time soon.

FR: I hope so too. And so again, thanks for keeping the music alive, everybody at Mobile Beat. And this is Felipe Rose, Native American Indian of the Village People. I leave you with my war call... **MB**

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In the Beginning: The Grand Entrance

HOW TO GET THE RECEPTION OFF TO A
MAGNIFICENT START

BY JAY MAXWELL •

My hands are cold, yet sweaty. After nearly thirty years as a wedding DJ, my heart still begins to beat faster as I pick up the microphone and prepare to say “Good evening ladies and gentlemen” and introduce the wedding party. I take a deep, calming breath as I remind myself to speak with confidence and to wear the sign of a personable professional—a smile. The special music for the introductions begins and in a few moments I proceed with the announcements.

Oddly enough, despite my level of excitement and slight anxiety, the entrance of the wedding party should be one of the easiest moments of the evening...if the proper planning has occurred and everyone has been fully instructed on what they should do both upon entering the room and after the introductions are completed.

THE NAME GAME

When you meet with the couple prior to the wedding day for their planning session(s), there are several questions that you should have in your planning guide to help you remember to ask them. To begin with, find out exactly who will be introduced. Some couples want the parents introduced along with the bridal party. Others will omit introducing the parents, still others will only want the bride and groom announced. There are other times when grandparents, ushers, swordsmen, sponsors or other special attendants will be on your list.

Regardless of who is on your list, the most important obligation you have is to pronounce every name correctly. During the consultation, repeat each name slowly and clearly and write

The entrance of the wedding party should be one of the easiest moments of the evening...if the proper planning has occurred and everyone has been fully instructed.

PERFORMANCE

out phonetically the spelling of any difficult names. Typically the bridesmaids and groomsmen are announced in pairs in the same order that they entered the wedding ceremony. Often this pairing is not finalized until the night of the rehearsal, but ask for the proposed pairings during the consultation.

Other important elements to consider will be if the bride and groom want titles like Mr. and Mrs. or Dr. if appropriate, or if they prefer simply first and last names. Also, find out if either set of parents are separated, divorced, or remarried. If so, discuss with the bride and groom desirable options to prevent embarrassing situations. Many brides would not want to announce their parents together if they are not still married to each other. Likewise, you would not want to say “the bride’s parents” when it is actually her mother and her current husband if she had recently remarried. We also recommend avoiding the title “stepfather” or “stepmother” if at all possible because of the negative connotation that “step” often implies.

MOOD MUSIC

Proper planning also includes asking the bride and groom what music they want played while guests are arriving, what song or songs they want played during the introductions, and who will be introduced at the reception. This is basic information, but vital to ensure a smooth start to their event. One of the recent trends is for the bridal couple to have a grand entrance with a dance routine for the bridal party. To add a bit of flair to this, accessories are often included, such as the entire party wearing sunglasses and “Blues Brothers” style hats for the guys. The music chosen is always upbeat music. For a dance routine, brides often choose current songs with a strong funky beat like “Forever” (Chris Brown) or “Flashing Lights” (Kanye West). However, old school R&B favorites like “Now That We Found Love” (Heavy D) or “Rock Steady” (Whispers) are often selected and work just as well. Many couples instead desire a more techno (“Get Ready For This” by 2 Unlimited) or rock & roll (“Footloose” by Kenny Loggins) punch for their introduction song. If in doubt, and you want to have a current top 40 feel for the intro tune, then Pink’s “Get the Party Started.” Or either of the Black Eyed Peas songs “Let’s Get It Started” or “I Gotta Feeling” will provide the needed energy for a powerful entry.

The key to playing the right song for the entrance is simply to ensure that the bridal couple makes the choice. Though many want songs suggested in the previous paragraph to “kick it up” as they enter, some follow a more traditional path of wanting an uplifting theme or anthem played such as their college fight song or their favorite movie soundtrack theme. Some couples simply want a upbeat instrumental song and we often suggest “Sirius” (a.k.a. The Chicago Bulls Theme Song, by Alan Parsons), “Discovery” (John Tesh) or “Battle Without Honor or Humanity” (Tomoyasu Hotei).

On the other end of the scale, we have recently had couples who want a separate song for the bridesmaids and then a different song for the groomsmen and then a unique song for the

POWER



bride and groom. Or even more elaborate than that is when couples have a specific song for every member of the wedding party. When this is the case, they often specify the exact starting and ending for the song snippet they want, totaling about 20 to 30 seconds of the song. When this is the direction the bridal couple takes, these songs must be prerecorded with all the tracks laid down in order. This takes pre-planning and a couple of hours of work, but it beats trying to mix 15 or more songs and announce the members of the party at the same time at the event.

SMOOTH OPERATOR

No matter how much pre-planning is done, the final key to a successful beginning is in a smooth execution. Prior to announcing the wedding party, make sure to include these final touches. If the event is both inside and outside, make an announcement for guests to come inside. Another important thing to remember is to ensure that the entrance path is clear. If necessary, quietly and individually inform people who might be standing in the way that in just a few minutes the bridal party will need this space to enter. If a toast is to be given immediately after the introductions, be sure beforehand that everyone has a beverage or that the caterers or bartenders are ready to serve the toasting beverage. Check with the bride that every member of the party is present. Greet the wedding party in a jovial way and get them geared up for fun. As you line everyone up as listed on the planning guide, be sure to double check that the order is still the same as when you met with the bride for the consultation. Also, pronounce each name to refresh your memory of how to say it and listen to each person for confirmation that you have it correct. The last thing to tell the party will be where to walk, where to stand, and what event will follow the introductions. The typical path will have them walk across the dance floor and stand in front of either the head table or the DJ table and remain there until the entire bridal party has entered.

When the critical moment finally arrives to make the announcements, turn up the volume of the entrance song in order to get everyone's attention. Smile. Give a welcome. Begin. Turn down the music so that it doesn't drown you out as you announce each couple. As they walk in, turn the volume of the music back up. Just before you announce the bride and groom, announce for everyone to stand and give a warm, congratulatory welcome to our bride and groom, Mr. and Mrs. _____. We usually recommend that the first dance take place as soon as the bride and groom enter, with the wedding party still standing close to the dance floor. After all, no matter how grand the entrance, the main reason the bride and groom hired us is that they wanted us to "Play something we can dance to!" **MB**

Mobile Beat's resident musicologist since 1992 (in every issue since #11), Jay Maxwell runs the multi-unit, multi-talent entertainment company, Jay Maxwell's Music by Request, LLC, in Charleston, South Carolina. He is also a professor of Mathematics and Business at Charleston Southern University. His passion for detail and continuous research of clients' requests can be found not only in this column, but also in his annually updated music guide, Play Something We Can Dance To.

Road Map to Reception Success

A WELL-CRAFTED WEDDING RECEPTION PLAN WILL ENSURE THAT **YOU** WILL BE THE ONE GIVING THE DIRECTIONS

BY STU CHISHOLM •

In his book, *The Best Wedding Reception Ever*, Peter Merry calls it an agenda. In my book, *The Complete Disc Jockey*, I call it an itinerary. Yet in a general sense it is a script, complete with cues, notes and a timeline. It is also what every DJ should create to keep their events running smoothly, on time and stress free.

WHAT IT IS

Every DJ I've ever met has a set of forms that they either mail or provide online for their clients to tell them all the details of their wedding reception: times, location, the activities and music they prefer and, just as importantly, the things they DO NOT want. There might even be instructions for the ceremony itself if it is being held at the same location. So a good agenda/itinerary is the end result of all of this information, placed into a logical order according to a timeline.

Having a well-defined start and finish also gives us the end caps of the itinerary, which plots out the exact time that each event will happen. It's a good thing to copy and pass along the basic itinerary to all of the other vendors, so that everyone knows what will happen when. I always try to conference with the photographer, videographer and caterer before buttoning down the final draft, and then I'll e-mail a copy, as well as print a few copies to pass out on site. This way nobody has any uncertainty about what is going on at any given time.

The DJ's copy is a bit more expansive, however, containing all of the announcements (scripted), music cues, names of the bridal party (sometimes twice; once for the grand entrance and again for the bridal dance) and a music list made up from returned forms and notes made from meetings, e-mails and phone conversations with the couple. I also include a prominent "Do Not Play" section to help me avoid the music and activities my clients would prefer not to have at their event.

WHAT IT ISN'T

An agenda/itinerary is NOT a panacea. It is not a guarantee of success. It is also not an edict to be set in stone.

°Instead, it is a tool. In the hands of a skilled DJ and other wedding service providers, it makes a wedding and reception flow smoothly. Clashes between the needs of various vendors

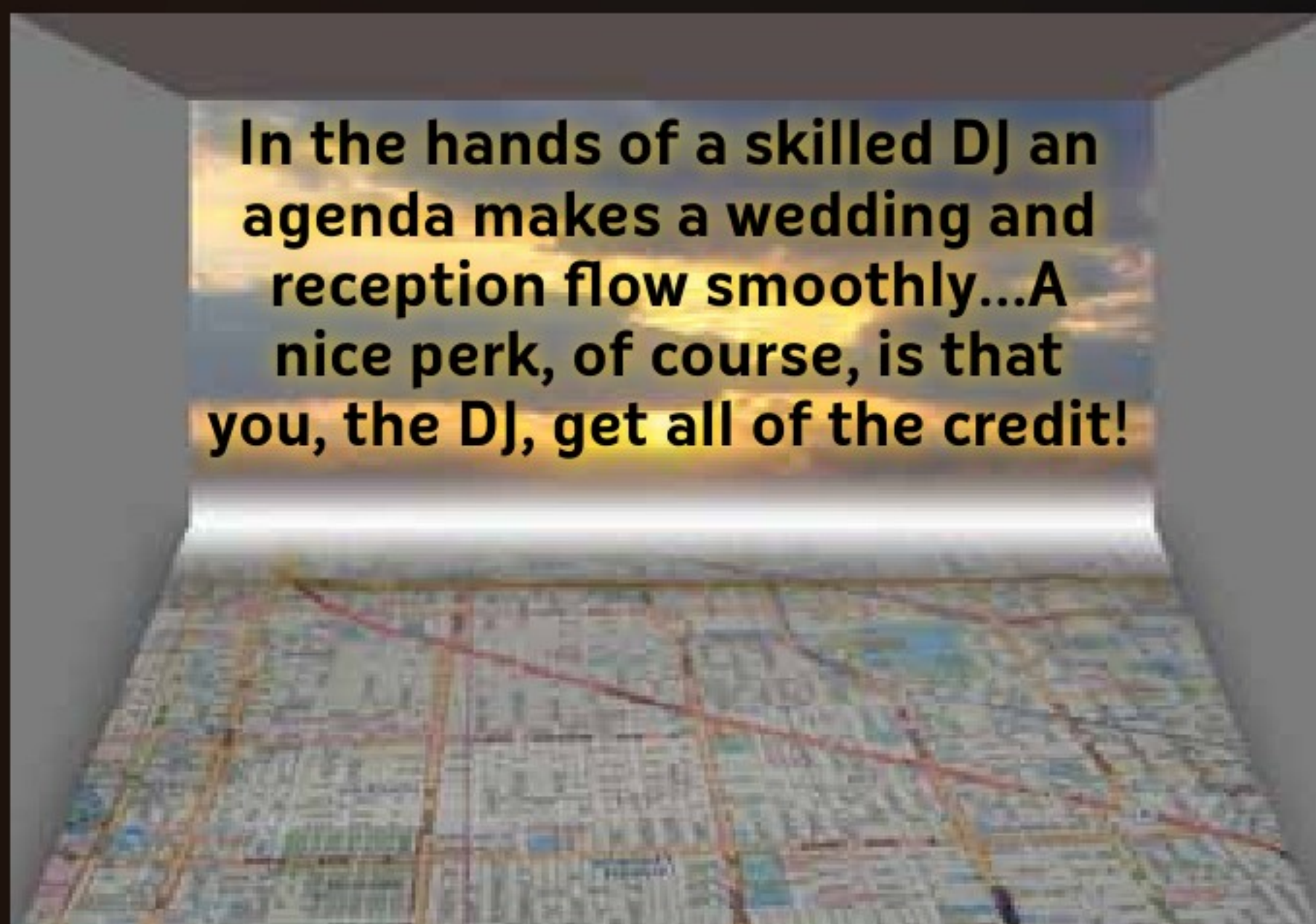


are avoided and, best of all, the evening plays out just as the clients have envisioned their event. A nice perk, of course, is that you, the DJ, get all of the credit!

That credit, however, is earned. First, it takes a lot of time and effort to generate an agenda. Changes may come fast and furious in the days leading up to the event. Then, once at the reception, one must work to adhere to it while, at the same time, remaining flexible enough to accommodate the inevitable delays or problems that each vendor might have. This means that all timelines will be general, so don't try to synchronize each and every second. This way various events being moved up or down won't throw you off track.

WHERE TO START

I like to head my agenda with the pertinent information that, under pressure, might just cause you to "space" (by which I mean entering that uncomfortable moment when something you've got down "cold" suddenly can't be brought to mind). For an agenda, that means the couple's name, the reception date and the name of the facility.



Next comes a checklist of things to be on the lookout for during the evening. For instance, before announcing the cutting of the wedding cake, it's a good idea to see if the serving set is in place. (And I always carry one, just in case!) Before announcing the toast and passing the mic over to the best man or other speakers, make sure that the champagne glasses are full. Before announcing the bouquet & garter toss, make sure that the bride is indeed wearing a garter and, if she's forgotten that detail during the excitement of the day, be sure to have a couple of spares handy. (I highly recommend the hand-made creations by Victoria, available at www.CustomWeddingGarters.com.) You might have other items depending on the type of event you're doing.

Finally we get to our timeline. Most reception timelines begin with the time that we might have access to the building. I like to arrive somewhere between 90 minutes and 2 hours prior to the start. It is important that this detail be worked out with the facility in advance.

The next time notation is when the guests are due to arrive. This is normally when the music begins signaling what is often

referred to as "cocktail hour"—that time between when the doors open and when dinner is served. Here we'll also notate the music that the client prefers for this time.

LET'S GET THIS PARTY STARTED

The one thing that truly kicks off a reception is the arrival of the bridal party, or "grand entrance." Your agenda should include everyone's names, spelled phonetically, in the order they'll be arriving. This will also include any scripted notes or "bits" that your client might have provided, and/or cues for any custom productions you might have made. A time to shine!

Events will differ in the order that they play out. In western states, it is popular for the couple to go right into their first dance and then a lively dance set before dinner is served. Other events will have the bride and groom heading straight up to the cake table for the cake cutting when the cake will be served as dessert rather than boxed for guests to take home. I have seen "Love Story" presentations used during the grand entrance, a follow-up to the toasts and prayer at the beginning of dinner, or my personal favorite, as a lead-in to the bride and groom's first dance.

Whatever the order, each event gets a time notation. I like to use a color-coded system, putting names in red, scripted copy in black and music notations in green. This way you can quickly see the upcoming songs you'll need at a glance. Continue this for each item, including those periods of open dancing, right on through until the last song of the night.

The tail end of my agenda is optional, but again, makes it easier for me to carry out the client's wishes. I break out their music requests into categories and then list them in order by BPM. It's a bit like having a road map, with possible detours and side trips, so that I can be ready for anything with an appropriate musical response. I highlight their "must play" tunes in red, so I'm sure that none will slip by forgotten.

PLANNED SPONTANEITY

At the Mobile Beat show in Chicago in 2002, Todd Mitchem told his audience that "the best spontaneous moments are scripted." His point was that preparation is the key. If you have the steps of your show (a.k.a. the "nuts and bolts") set down in your mind (or on your agenda), you can then better focus on your audience and let those special moments happen. An itinerary/agenda is a way to facilitate this. I also find that it is a great stress reliever, making it easier for me to carry out the wishes of the client while staying at ease, better able to be personable and in the moment.

The agenda/itinerary is nothing new or peculiar to DJs. Regular viewers of David Letterman, Jay Leno, Jimmy Fallon and other late-night entertainers might notice the blue cards they constantly consult. These are their agendas, helping them to stay on track while letting their personalities shine! So stay shiny and be sure to create an agenda for every show. Until next time, safe spinnin'! **MB**

Stu Chisholm, a mobile DJ in the Detroit area since 1979, has also been a nightclub DJ, done some radio, some commercial voice-over work and has even worked a roller skating rink! Stu attended the famous Specs Howard School of Broadcasting and has been a music collector since the age of seven. Stu's guide to the profession, The Complete DJ, was recently released by ProDJ Publishing.

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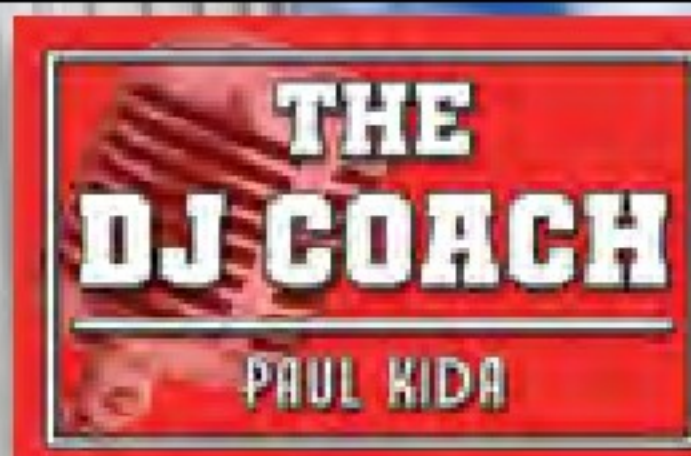
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Gig Prep, Step by Step

TAKING THE PROPER STEPS BEFORE AN EVENT ENSURES A GREAT PERFORMANCE FOR THE CLIENT AND PEACE OF MIND FOR YOU

BY PAUL KIDA, THE DJ COACH •

It's the day of your gig and you are ready to go. The van is packed; you have all of your paperwork, music lists, music, gear, props, etc. You're off! Arriving at the venue, you unpack, set up and hope for the best. As the evening progresses, you realize that you didn't bring the bubble machine and a few props that the client had asked for at your meeting. Oh well, no problem, with all of the excitement going on, they probably won't even miss them. Then you realize that you forgot to load a few songs that they had on their request list. That shouldn't be a big problem either though, because you have 17 songs out of the 20 that they requested. Who's going to miss just those three songs? As the night pushes on, you are really feeling beat! You're thinking, "I probably shouldn't have stayed so late at my friend's party last night. Wow! I think I only got four hours of sleep! Oh, well, I've done this so many times, I really could do it in my sleep!"

After reading the previous paragraph, what thoughts are running through your head? If you are like me, you are probably wondering how anyone could go so unprepared to a gig. How could someone care so little about their clients needs or their own reputation?

In this article, we will discuss the steps that we should all take in preparing for any of our gigs, including both physical steps and mental preparation, so that we will be focused on our jobs and have that extra edge that separates true professionals from others. Most of these things should be obvious, but there still might be a reminder here of something that you have let slip over time, something you need to adjust to get back to your own pro standards.

LET'S GET PHYSICAL: GEAR AND MUSIC

First of all, go over the paperwork that you have already completed at your meeting with your clients to see if there is anything extra that you need, like the bubble or fog machine mentioned above, special lights, or props. (Yes, I include props as part of the "equipment" if they are requested. I'm also assuming that earlier in the week you have checked out your performance gear to make sure it's all functioning properly.) Sometimes, especially if you're in a hurry, you may take it for granted that you have packed it all, but then find out later that something is missing. As you are packing your vehicle, why not mentally check off what is being packed, or even better, have a written list that you can check off, along with a place to list "special items" that you may not pack for every gig, but use only when requested. This could end up being invaluable to you when it saves you from a major blunder.

Now, back to that event checklist that you've already created with your client. At least one to two weeks prior to your



Paul Kida, The DJ Coach, is a founding member of the Colorado Disc Jockey Association. He owns JAMMCATTS DJ Entertainment (www.jammcatsdj.com), and is a regular speaker at the Mobile Beat DJ Show.

event, you should go over that list, and make sure that you have all of their requested songs—not just the ones that you feel are important. Don't just say, "I think I have the songs I'll need." If you are missing some, then get online and get them so that you are all set the day of the event. Of course, there is no way to know what may be requested from the guests. However, you can ask yourself if you have the newest, most popular songs. You should know by your checklist your clients' favorite genres and artists, so zeroing in on the best choices shouldn't be too hard.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Next, review the list for the names of those you will be announcing, as well as other family members, such as grandparents, and special friends that may be attending. As an aid to correct pronunciation, you may want to spell names out phonetically to be sure you will say them correctly. For example, one name that I always ask about is Megan. Is it "Maygan," "Meegan," or "Mehgan?" Seem a little nit-picky? Well, if someone has a name like this, and people have been mispronouncing it all of their lives, it IS a huge deal to them!

MENTAL PREP

Preparing your mind and body for your best performance starts well before the gig, by making sure you are getting proper rest. The night before any event should mean only one thing, and that is focusing on the upcoming event. Your job is to make the client's party a success; you can party the night after the gig!

The night before the gig should also be used to visualize each step you take upon waking in the morning. Personally, I actually visualize myself packing the van, checking my attire, driving to the venue, then speaking with the staff, setting up, greeting the guests as they come in, announcing the grand entrance, the bride and groom doing their first dance, the presentation of a rose from the groom to his mother right before they dance, and so on and so on until all of the special events of the evening are clearly in my mind. I have spoken to you before about the power of visualization, and I will say it again. Use it, because it really works! It may seem silly at first because you have done so many events that it all just comes naturally, but it really doesn't matter how long you have been in the business—we can all learn something new and improve ourselves.

It is really better to not schedule anything else on the day of your event. Your client deserves your full attention on their day. If you have a wedding on a Saturday night, don't spend the day running errands or hanging out with your buddies. You can do all that the next day. Your event that day or evening should be your focal point for the day.

Make plans to pack up and leave early to make sure you have plenty of time to arrive safely, well before the event. I know that here in Denver, you never know what the traffic may be like until you get on the road! If just one accident occurs, or if there is some sort of sporting event downtown, traffic can slow down to a crawl.

A PEACEFUL, EASY FEELING


Many times when we arrive at the venue, we are so occupied with setting things up (especially if we haven't allowed enough time) that we don't have the extra time to talk to anyone else that may be there working. However, if you allow enough time to get there early, this is an excellent time to talk with the venue staff, the cake person, florist, etc. and establish relationships with them for referrals in the future. Yes, everyone is busy, but if you just show a sincere interest in people by complimenting them on their displays, or even giving them a hand if needed, it really makes an impression. They WILL remember you and refer you the next time they have the chance. Of course, you don't want to come off as a pompous know-it-all, but you can usually see when someone needs a hand if you are already set up and ready to go.

Common courtesy is also seriously lacking in our world today, and the words, "Excuse me," "please," "thank you," and especially, "Is there anything I can help you with?" can go a long way in establishing lasting relationships. It also helps to set the tone of the evening. When everyone is friendly and comfortable with each other, things run much more smoothly throughout the whole evening. When appropriate, I will ask the staff, while they are setting up, if there is any music they would like to hear before the crowd gets there. It's amazing how much friendlier people get when you show a little personal interest. I have a couple of venues where the workers always come up to me and say, "Oh, I was hoping that you were the DJ for tonight! Will you

If you allow enough time to get to the venue early, this is an excellent time to talk with the venue staff, the cake person, florist, etc. and establish relationships with them for referrals in the future.

play some tunes while we set up?" It's really a good feeling!

I will end this by reiterating, just plan out your events to the last detail, carefully prepare and follow through with the plans you have made with your clients beforehand, and visualize yourself as successfully carrying out the evening both physically and mentally. Stay focused on the job at hand. If you consistently go step by step through the process each time, your events will continue to shine and you will be known as one of the best in the business!

Please send any comments on this article, suggestions for future articles or questions to djcoach@mobilebeat.com. 

Inside Mitzvahs: Wisdom from the Experts

THE TRADITIONS ARE ESSENTIAL, BUT THERE'S A LOT MORE TO MITZVAH SUCCESS THAN JUST KNOWING WHAT SONGS TO PLAY WHEN

BY DJ DAYNA •

Bar and Bat Mitzvah celebrations, those familiar coming-of-age events for Jewish boys and girls, have evolved over the years into a major DJ market in many area of this country. In most parts of the US they happen year-round, so it's an industry that produces a lot of revenue for mobile companies and provides a potentially lucrative outlet for companies who are looking to expand. Mobile entertainers enjoy doing Mitzvahs because each one can be a unique challenge.

Looking for their thoughts on the Mitzvah market and tips for the best performances in this area, I interviewed old school and new school Mitzvah DJs alike, from across the nation. We talked about a wide range of topics, including; the ingredients for producing an effective Mitzvah; the roles of each entertainer and how they work together; how the events have changed over the years; current trends and challenges; and how to deal with clients. Here is what the experts had to say.

Creating a successful a Mitzvah experience takes more than one element to wow the crowd and make a lasting impression. Of course it involves the right group of high-energy entertainers and their interaction with the guests at the event, creative games, a solid time line, and the ability to mix up the music to satisfy every age group in attendance. The experts also offer other suggestions for taking your Mitzvah presentations to the next level.

THE KEY TO MITZVAH POWER: THE TEAM

A key element that everyone agrees on is that it's essential to have a great team of entertainers. When it comes to Bar and Bat Mitzvahs, there is a clear division of labor between the roles of MC, DJ, and Party Motivator, unlike many other events, where one person might be doing all three at different times. There are three major quali-

ties that these team members must have to make the night seamless: They all should have amazing personalities, be kid-friendly, and know their responsibilities clearly.

THE MC OR MASTER OF CEREMONIES, wears many hats and can be considered the glue that holds it all together. MCs need to be organized because they'll coordinate every part of the party. They are in charge of everyone else the night of the party, so it's their job to communicate with the DJ and Party Motivators to make sure they are all on the same page. They have to make sure not only that everything is going right on the dance floor, but in the surrounding atmosphere as well.

Let's face it, the first person everyone is going to be looking to when something goes right or wrong is the MC. **Shani Barnett**, who is an MC/DJ/Dancer for Mobile Music Interactive Entertainment in Chicago says, "The MC is the person who will get all the compliments and the person who will get all the complaints."

Behind the scenes, another responsibility of the MC (and in some cases, the DJ) is to connect with the Mitzvah kid and develop a connection before the event. If this is your role, set up a meeting with young man or lady, and find out what their likes and dislikes are, what their favorite songs are, follow-along dances they might

enjoy, games, etc.

THE DJs, in the case of Bar and Bat Mitzvahs, are only responsible for the music, but they are just

as important as anyone else—and definitely at times don't get enough credit. They stay behind the booth, but they hold a lot of power. The DJ should be trained in all genres of music and be quick on the draw, knowing how to feed off of the crowd.

It's crucial for the DJ to be in sync with the MC throughout the evening. The majority of the experts I talked to agreed that regularly pairing up the same DJ and MC is a smart idea. When it comes the music, there are two different ways companies see the DJ's role: Some choose to have MCs call the shots on the music, because they are in charge and a lot of MCs are also DJs.

Others give the DJ creative control of the music. From the DJs' perspective, they appreciate it when they can use their knowledge of music creatively and not just be button pushers.

Of course, sometimes the musical success of the evening can take an unusual direction.



Above:
Where's
Bobby



Bobby
Morganstein



Shani Barnett

Mark Ray of Ray Entertainment, who has been emceeing Mitzvahs since 1981, thinks sometimes it's as simple as letting the kid actually be the "DJ" at their own party: "I teach the kids weekly at parties to DJ. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to pick a song and press play, I don't let them totally take over, but man you would not believe how many Bar Mitzvahs I've got booked on because another kid thought it was the coolest thing in the world."



Mark Ray

THE PARTY MOTIVATOR OR INTERACTIVE DANCER'S main responsibility is to enhance the party and keep the energy going the entire night. Barnett tells her interactive dancers, "You're an MC without a microphone." They should know all the latest dances and not be afraid to pull people out on the dance floor. They are the MC's right hand people on the dance floor, so the MC should take advantage and use them where ever he feels they are needed. You might have one in charge of the Hora chair and assign another to be in charge of giveaways. You can spread them out on the dance floor or have one mingle with the guests who aren't dancing. A general rule of thumb is to have one dancer per 25 kids.

A great way to ensure that you have a powerful staff is by hosting training workshops with the team. For instance, **Bobby Morganstein**, who helms one of the leading entertainment production companies on the East Coast, holds a staff meeting every month, "Number one, it helps with the camaraderie of the group, and number two, it's just a good time for people to get to know each other." **Nate Horowitz**, a young owner of New Vibe Entertainment in Florida has special bi-annual meetings, where they meet in the summer for a picnic and then in the winter which he combines it with a holiday party.

THE ONLY CONSTANT IS CHANGE

From the 1980s until present day, Mitzvahs have definitely changed in a lot of ways, but in others they haven't changed at all. Some of the veterans walked down memory lane to share their points of view on how Mitzvahs have changed and also how they keep up with the times. They work on reinventing themselves by attending seminars and networking with other DJs to bounce ideas off of them.

Morganstein, who started doing Mitzvahs 25 years ago says, "They were more kid-oriented parties, and then we started doing parties with kids and adults, but they weren't the real high-end type parties, and

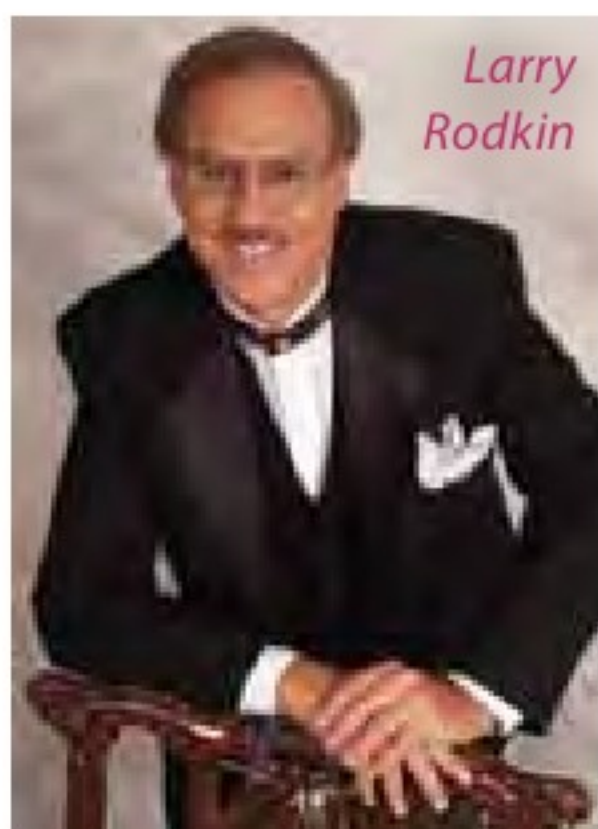


Nate Horowitz

then eventually, a few years into adding a dancer and beefing up the production, the prices were really getting up there, and we were able to compete against the bands for the evening jobs. At that point, when I started with the dancer and

DJ, there wasn't anybody in my market doing that. Over the years, the number of dancers we brought, the prizes we gave out, and the costumes we wore all changed."

Mark Ray, one of the first Bar Mitzvah DJs in Los Angeles, recalls the 1980s as the "years of excess, when people were spending unbelievable amounts of money. In the 1990s the kids became, for lack of a better word, more belligerent; they were rude and difficult. You couldn't please them! One time I went up to a group of kids and asked why they weren't digging this break dancer and they said, 'If you wanna impress me, then light yourself on fire.' In the late 1990s things became better and the kids were more real and responsive to line dances. Now, I find the kids are much more willing to get up and participate than they have been in years."



Larry Rodkin

Larry Rodkin, who also started DJing Mitzvahs in the 80s, has seen a dramatic change in the number of add-ons like photo booths, magicians, henna tattoos, hats, and

t-shirts. According to Rodkin, "As people have become more sophisticated I think, with the internet, they see a lot of things available, it's always 'Can you get this for me?' We are not the DJ company anymore, we are Lawrence of Florida Entertainment and Events, we offer all types of entertainment, not just DJs."

The trend of mobile DJ companies becoming a one-stop-shop for Mitzvahs has spread across the country.

As Barnett puts it for her clients, "This is what you want? Great—this is what we can do for you!" Everyone wants to make their party different, so providing a wide variety of services to clients is a way to make them feel like their party is special.

Horowitz, a successful Mitzvah performer for 6 years, in Florida and beyond, advises DJs to be careful about advertising their company as one that provides the various types of services if they actually outsource them. "The problem is that a lot of companies rent from me and some of them like to label themselves as such. When you label yourself as having everything and you don't, then you have to provide everything and a lot of times you can't keep up with the out-



Shani B: focused on fun

side costs. Or if your client figures out it's a little bit more than what they heard, then they'll call somebody like me directly and the other company loses out entirely or I lose out entirely." He continues, "It's okay to outsource certain things, like a dancing green screen or trussing, but it's very hard to mark up uplighting, since it's a common thing now and can be done very easily; and everyone is getting into it."

TRENDS: UP-TO-THE-MINUTE MITZVAHS

As trends come and go, it can be a challenge to stay fresh. Our experts agree that you should try to think outside the box, reinvent yourself every season and strive to be the one who raises the bar in your market. Here are some of the hottest current trends.

- BMP Productions just added a lounge division that offers many different types of leather sofas, chairs, ottomans and LED tables.

- In Chicago, Mobile Music Interactive Entertainment adds flavor to the party by doing Video Music Dance Parties, where they bring in a huge projection screen, the DJ may be doing live video mixing, the videographer is doing a live simulcast, or they have some sort of ambient video cued so that something is always on the screen.

- **Marc Weinstock** of Party Nation In Florida, has noticed a shift in the music/games mix: "There seems to be fewer games and a more club-oriented vibe, where the music is the focus. Clients want to let the music do the talking and have one or two add-ons, and that's it."

- Lighting is becoming really popular, because it brings life to the party. Especially the LED set ups with white Lycra backdrops. LED uses less power but allows more unique effect.

- On the West Coast and in the Midwest, companies are starting to add a percussionist or violist, to play along with the DJ. Also, with the surge in the amount



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of DJ equipment featuring iPod docks and hook ups, DJs are finding that to be a useful tool. Mitzvah kids often have an iPhone, so if there's a certain song they want and you don't have it, you can plug them directly into your system.



Spring Austin

• In some areas, instead of wearing the standard black attire and all the dancers wearing the same outfits, a lot of the newer companies, as well as some of the veteran companies, are now wearing all white or wearing black outfits with a trendy, funky twist. And some are even

incorporating the theme of the Mitzvah with a look that's new and hip.

• As far as party favors go, anything that glows or lights up is a must-have giveaway.

And on the flip side, Horowitz says there are some "things to look out for, as far as party favors go: Inflatables are fading

out because kids are beating each other up with them in ways we've never seen. The new thing is the light-up teeth, but the venues freak out because they think the kids are going to trip and fall and choke on them. Feather boas shed and get stuck in the carpet and maracas are being banned in some places because if they break, then someone can slip and fall."

NEW SCHOOL IS IN SESSION

An increasing number of "new age" or "new school" companies are springing up in the market, with young owners, DJs, and MCs; and they are becoming more and more prevalent in the Mitzvah market. They bring an edgy and hip style, while incorporating traditional and classic themes and formalities.

Spring Austin of Skyline Entertainment in Los Angeles provides a good example of the trend. "Although we're energetic and fun, we are not the cheesy DJs. We're not over the top or obnoxious. We are young and hip and more stylish and that makes a difference, especially when you are dealing with kids..." She also tries to be different by offering various forms of the essential "Hava Nagila" dance to her clients: "I made this whole mix, there's a techno one and all these cool different ones that I fixed up. Sometimes I even mix "Hava Nagila" with some other song and people really like that."

Eddie Bardi of DJ Eddie Entertainment, also based in Los Angeles, says it's a combination of youth and character that makes his company. "We have the young character, atmosphere, and new tactics, which is a perfect balance with the adults and kids at the party."

Kelly McCoy of Dlux Entertainment, another young, SoCal Mitzvah entertainer, with 9 years experience, says, "My approach with my clients is Hollywood, professional, and fun...I won't show up to a client meeting in a business suit." He also adds, "I have versatility with what I offer. Dancing, DJing and emceeing—I can do all three of those things personally, but I also offer them packages. I can accommodate their budgets based on what they want."

The veterans are experiencing increased competition with the influx of younger companies. Ray laments, "The challenges now, unlike in the 80s where I was the only kid on the block, there's a million DJs and everyone is willing to sell their soul to get the job, so the pricing has horribly changed at least by a third in the last year."

With the reality that the Mitzvah market is seeing an increase

Number one, make sure your client is taken care of completely. Number two is...understand that everyone who is there is a potential customer. So make sure all the kids, the adults, and grandparents leave having fun. We don't only focus on the kids or the adults: We are not happy unless everyone is happy. —Bobby Morganstein

in young entrepreneurs, veterans are having to face the challenge to still be "cool" to the younger generation. One way Morganstein does so is, "by telling my clients that 'I am the Entertainment Coordinator for your party. I will MC the first hour and I will bring my guys with me who will play games with the kids.' By doing that, my bookings still stay consistent."

Ray, who has done over 2,000 Mitzvahs since 1981 and still has bookings into 2010 says, "I just can't believe 12-year-olds still find me relevant at my age, but I'm still young at heart and that makes a good deal of difference. Still, I'm trying to always reinvent myself. I took a comedy workshop to try and change my shtick, and I took dance

lessons from my dancers; and most recently I started working out again and I feel great and can dance better too."

SHE'S GOT STYLE, SHE'S GOT GRACE...

Being a female DJ/MC brings on another set of challenges. Austin has learned how to not to let that get in her way. "I don't give

clients the option anymore if they prefer a male or female. I just meet with them, but if they come back and say they prefer a male, then fine. I've noticed a lot more of the Bat Mitzvahs are requesting females, but I think some people are more comfortable with what they know and want a male. As time goes by I've heard more and more people say wow, I've never heard of a female DJ before; they're much more open to it now and think it adds something really cool and unique to their event." Barnett takes a similar approach: "The way I deal with clients who say they aren't sure about a female MC, is that I always try to have the client come into the office so I can meet

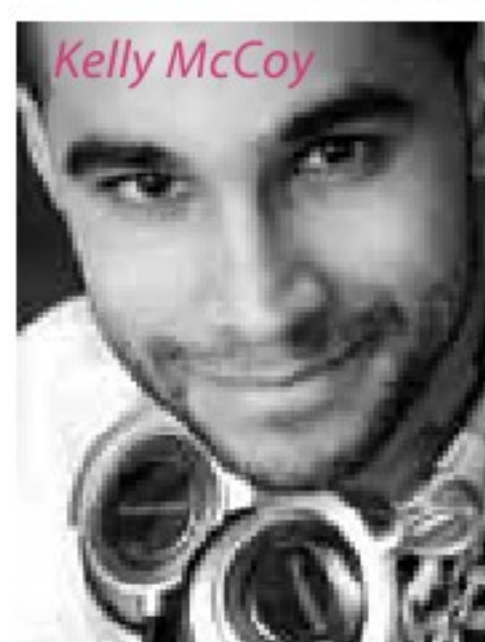
with them in person, and show them our promo. And I can talk to them. I feel I can close a deal more in the office than over the phone."

MAKING CLIENT CONNECTIONS

Knowing how to deal with Mitzvah



Eddie Bardi



Kelly McCoy

Top Tips from the Mitzvah Mavens

1. Always have a backup system and a Plan B. For instance, tell another DJ/MC where you are in case of an emergency. (Mark Ray)
2. Don't bad-mouth another company—it's bad business. (Shani Barnett)
3. Sell the right product to the right client. Don't go trying to sell every upgrade that you have to every single client. (Marc Weinstock)
4. Don't hire a staff of performers who have intentions of becoming mobile entertainers for a career. Look for people who want to be actors or musicians who treat it as a part time job. (Mark Ray)
5. Surround yourself with positive people who know what they're doing and enjoy working. Eliminate any negatives around the operation. (Bobby Morganstein)
6. Understand that the center of attention at a Mitzvah is the kid, not you. (Mark Ray)
7. To the very new DJ who's just getting started in the mobile events industry: Find a mentor who can teach you the basics on what to do and what not to do. (Spring Austin)
8. Educate yourself: Know the Jewish traditions and terminology. (Larry Rodkin)
9. Always listen to the client. (Eddie Bardi)
10. Do all you can to help the client understand that this is your job and you know what you're doing. (Nate Horowitz)

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THE COMPLETE DISC JOCKEY

A Comprehensive Manual for the Professional DJ

BY STU CHISHOLM

WITH A FORWARD BY MARK FERRELL



Stu Chisholm, a DJ since 1979, has worked on radio, in night-clubs, at raves and rinks, as a voice-over artist, and for a wide variety of mobile events. Based on his years of experience and research he has packed over a dozen ways to "Supplement your DJ income..." with DJ INCOME! into this concise, practical, info-packed guide.



Plus, along with practical tips to help you access new income opportunities, Stu shares "Tales from the Trenches," true, entertaining stories of unusual moments from his long career.

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clients the correct way will take you all the way from sealing the deal and to making them very happy at the end of the night—and leaving them ready to refer you to all their friends.

Austin says the one thing that is important is “creating a relationship with the client so that there’s the right chemistry.” McCoy also adds, “Create trust with the client, and be positive with them every step of the way.”

Always ask the client what they want and how they envision their party. Keep in mind that no two parties are the same. Bardi says, “We don’t have a set way we do a Bar/Bat Mitzvah; we make it unique and different every time.”

Every client wants to be different than his or her friends. Some mobile companies have set packaging, while others customize every package catering to the clients’ needs which gives it a personal touch.

“I ask my clients what are the three key words you want your party to be and what is the style of your family?” says Barnett. “Is your family upbeat? Is your family laid back, or is



Kelly M has the magic touch



Nate H twists 'em up



Mark R and crew strike a pose

your family in between? And then I ask them how they want their party. Do they want it more upbeat, laid back or in between? That way I can get the vibe of what they want for their party.”

Nowadays, like any other client, the Mitzvah client wants a deal. Ray suggests you determine a base price in correspondence to your style of party, meaning birthday party versus wedding or Bar/Bat Mitzvah. He says, “You have to determine how much you can adjust the price, but still meet your bottom line.” He likes to run specials periodically. Rodkin says his company hasn’t lowered their prices, and clarifies: “Sometimes it’s a question of giving

people a more perceived value. For example, let’s say your package includes a DJ, MC, and 2 dancers, party favors with lights etc. and let’s say the package is \$3,000 and someone says that’s a lot more than they wanted to spend, the answer is then to ask them what were they looking to invest in the success of their party.”

The best form of advertising across the board is by word of mouth. Doing a great job at a party will go a long way. Also, make sure you stay on top of your social media outlets, i.e. website, Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, and LinkedIn.

If you are just starting a mobile company or thinking of expanding your company into the Mitzvah market, Morganstein suggests you can offer your services for free to synagogues, or do dances at the local elementary schools and parties at the camps during the summer.

“The best way to do it is pound the pavement,” thinks Marc Weinstock. “Go out and introduce yourself to locations and temples. I don’t believe tradeshow or advertising pay off in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah industry.”

Networking with DJ peers, can be an important tool. You can ask others for ideas, as well as let them know you want to add Mitzvah to your niche. That way they can refer you if they are completely booked one weekend and get a call from a client. Moreover, building relationships with event coordinators and planners is also highly recommended.

Larry Rodkin takes unique visual ap-

Expert Connections

Spring Austin

Skyline Entertainment
www.skyline-entertainment.com

Eddie Bardi

DJ Eddie Entertainment
www.djeddieentertainment.com

Shani Barnett

Mobile Music Interactive Entertainment
STORM Interactive Entertainment
www.MobileMusicOnline.com
www.PartyWithSTORM.com

Nate Horowitz

New Vibe Entertainment
www.newvibeentertainment.com

Kelly McCoy

DLux Entertainment
www.dluxent.com

Bobby Morganstein

BMP Productions
www.bobbymorganstein.com

Mark Ray

Ray Entertainment
www.rayentertainment.com

Larry Rodkin

Lawrence of Florida
www.lawrenceofflorida.com

Marc Weinstock

Party Nation
www.partynationevents.com

proach, using Lawrence of Florida logo/name imprints on some of their party favors. Wristbands are effective because sometimes the guests keep them as a souvenirs, and then remember to call the DJ for their parties. He also uses mic flags with the company name, so if someone is watching a video or looking through pictures they’ll see the company’s name and remember it.

But the best way to promote a DJ business as the right Mitzvah choice is to leave a positive impression with everyone at each event. Bobby Morganstein sums it up this way:

“Number one, make sure your client is taken care of completely. Number two is, when you’re at the party, understand that everyone who is there is a potential customer. So make sure all the kids, the adults, and grandparents leave having fun. We don’t only focus on the kids or the adults: We are not happy unless everyone is happy.” **ME**



What started as college cash soon became a passion for DJ DAYna, when she fell in love with the energy she found behind the turntables and in front of a crowd. She’s been spinning as a mobile and club DJ ever since. Based in LA, she freelances as a DJ/MC for special events.

Helpful Mitzvah Info

“ABCs of Bar/Bat Mitzvah”

www.aish.com/jl/l/48956006.html

The basics of the religious tradition summarized in a brief, readable article.

How To DVD Series, Complete Party CD Series - www.bmpcd.com

Bobby Morganstein (BMP Productions) is the acknowledged leader in DJ education on Bar/Bat Mitzvah production, with his How To videos helping many master the ins and outs of Mitzvah celebrations. The Complete Party CDs contain all the necessary traditional music a DJ needs for the event.

And for the serious student of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah event, Bobby is available for personal training sessions at your location. Contact him through www.bobbymorganstein.com for details.

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New Tools to Help You Break into Schools

MATT RYAN'S SCHOOL DANCE MARKETING TOOL KIT COULD HELP YOU BUILD A STRONGER PRESENCE IN YOUR LOCAL SCHOOL MARKET

BY RYAN BURGER •

Many DJs get their start in the school dance market, usually for a couple of reasons. For one, it's generally easy to understand. For another, many of us are still in the high school age group or have just left it.

In 1986, when I started my disc jockey service, with my partner, David Curtis, I was in my freshman year of high school. Our first

calls came in from the local junior high schools to the high school radio station that we were part of. We took the jobs thinking, "Of course we can do it!" We got prepared with music beyond our personal collections, borrowed some extra sound equipment, and our school dance career began. Our company grew from there, with David later moving on to other endeavors, to where BC Productions is now doing 200 to 250 events a year, of all kinds. But I have always had a fondness for the school market because of our history in it, the regularity of the contracts with the schools, and the ease of doing the events.

KEEPING THINGS FRESH


Back before the Internet was popular and before I had attended the Mobile Beat DJ conferences, I had a very strong business and I really thought I was at the top of my game. Heck, for Des Moines, Iowa I was way ahead of most of my competition. Once I got to the conferences, though, I found out I was good...but not great, from a national perspective. So, 15 years ago, we went back and improved our shows, our marketing and our business practices back.

Now we find ourselves at another major transition in what we are doing with the business. Over the last 5 years I had spent most of my time working on Mobile Beat and its properties but changes, due mainly to the sour economy, brought me back into working more closely on events and the DJ service in general. Jake Feldman took the reins as company manager and has actually driven us forward with a 20% growth over the last year, after a few years of declining numbers.

In the school dance market, where BC Productions has always excelled, we have steadily grown, gained customers, lost a few here and there. But we haven't done anything dramatic with that part of the business until now. After reading Matt Ryan's School Dance Marketing Tool Kit, available at SchoolDancePros.com, I was inspired to kick things up in that market area again.

SHARPENING OUR TOOLS

We've picked up a lot of new ideas from Matt Ryan's book, that is helping us hit the school dance market with a fresh approach. (While I think I qualify as a DJ marketing expert, having spoken at numerous national and regional DJ conferences, I think one of the keys to success is realizing that there's always more to learn. If you're not growing, you're dead.) I have gone through and first overhauled our cover letters and packages; considered taking things in a different direction in terms of bonuses for employees on events with awesome reviews; tried using viral marketing on students; and more.

Matt has put together a fantastic e-book that every DJ service should consider buying if they have any interest in the school dance market. Check out more details at www.schooldancepros.com and get a sample chapter or two sent to you just for signing up on their email list. 

School Dance Marketing Tool Kit

By Matt Ryan • www.SchoolDancePros.com

CHAPTERS INCLUDE:

Making Your Product School-Ready and Student-Appropriate
Pre-Approved Set Lists: Never Get Another Music Complaint Again
How to Get the Best Prizes in the World!
Ensuring Consistent, Quality Performances through a Client Satisfaction Survey
Bonus Pay System: Keep Your DJs Working Harder for Your Clients
Using Clients as Marketing Tools with a Testimonial Page
Constructing Your School Dance Testimonial Page
The Price is Right for Schools
Effectively Presenting Your Rates to Schools
How to Address the Issue of Rate Increases
Guaranteed Gigs: Securing Multiple Bookings
You Pick the Dates of Your Gigs: Managing Date Inventory
Constructing Your Dance Reservation Form
How to Book Schools on Non-Peak Nights of the Week
Making School Events Easy to Book
Viral Marketing to Students
How Many Potential Brides Work in Schools?
Working with Travel Companies in School Tour Markets
Serving as a School Dance Consultant to Schools

Waking from the School Daze: Dealing with Dance Issues

RIC HANSEN'S SCHOOL DANCE NETWORK IS HELPING DJs GET PROACTIVE ABOUT YOUTH DANCE DECENCY

It's no secret, at least to mobile DJs and school administrators, that the biggest challenges in doing youth events over the last few years have been inappropriate music and dancing.

Ric Hansen, mobile DJ company owner and creator of the School Dance Network (www.SchoolDanceNetwork.com) has accepted the challenges and in the process created an incredibly useful resource for both school administrators and DJs alike, as they try to navigate the stormy seas of song choices, editing for content, youth dance trends, the "secret" language of texting, and much more. We pick up in the middle of a conversation Ric recently had with Mobile Beat's publisher, Ryan Burger.

Ryan Burger: ...Ric, you've got a unique way of going after the school market and telling people about safe songs, freak dancing, that kind of stuff. I'm going to let you tell your story, and we'll get into his past history after that. Tell us about yourself.

Ric Hansen: Thanks, Ryan, and I appreciate your taking some time in doing this. We originally started out as a mobile DJ company, and like it is for every mobile DJ, the biggest issue of the day over the last probably two, three, maybe even more years depending on where you live, has been, first of all, the appropriateness of the music; the bad lyrics, the inappropriate verbiage used in the lyrics of songs. And there's also the way teenagers at schools are dancing.

The two issues have become huge amongst administrators at schools. And so we either dance around the issues, which we did do for a while, or we face them head-on and try to figure out ways to help solve the problems. As a mobile DJ company, of course, we're concerned because if it's not resolved it diminishes the number of dances and the amount of business that we can do with schools because they just say, "Well, if you're not going to dance appropriately, or if we can't get the right music in here, we're just not going to do the dances." So consequently, they've cut back to maybe the prom and the homecoming and everything else falls by the wayside. So we don't want that to happen...that's the business side of it.

The other part of it is just flat-out, as good people, we don't want to go in and promote or be a part of promoting raunchy lyrics and raunchy dancing at schools. So it's a combination of those two. That's why the School Dance Network came to be, and that's basically what we're working at with the website; it's there to help the administrators sort out the details and come to some conclusions about how they can handle their dances appropriately.

Last year was kind of an experimental year. We launched the website last year, and we played around with it a bit. I think we learned a lot of things. And now as we go into this

next school year, we hopefully have some more answers and some better information for schools and for disc jockeys.

R B: Yeah...back in the days of "Baby Got Back" and that kind of stuff, it wasn't obvious. But in music nowadays, it's a lot more obvious in what they're doing. And even when you do censor out certain words, there's a ton more in the meaning behind it. So knowing what these songs are about is essential. I know I've had kids come up at dances and say, "Can you play this song?" And I say, "Well, I can't play it unless I get permission from your administrator. Do you want to come with me and I'll explain what the song's about to him?" And they of course back off...

Going back before you rolled out the School Dance Network, how long you've been a disc jockey? Do you still go out and do the stuff yourself, or are you more of an office guy with your personal mission now being the School Dance Network?

R H: Well, you're going to get the inside scoop. The interesting part about my background is I have never done a mobile DJ event myself.

R B: Okay.

R H: That seems a little strange because we have maybe one of the bigger DJ companies in the country. What our DJ company does is we hook with radio stations in different cities around the country and we promote that radio station by virtue of staging dances at schools in their area, and we stage them in their name. So in Chicago, we're KILS-103.5. In Seattle here, we're KUBE-93. And so that's how my business started. It's because of my background in radio that drove me to this being a great entrepreneurial opportunity.

So I don't do any events, but I certainly am not in my ivory tower, not understanding and seeing what's going on at the schools, because I go out to these dances all the time and see what's going on. So I think I can—first of all, from my age and maturity, I can approach this from the administrator's point of view, and at the same time, I know what the DJ has to deal with: walking that very fine line between being hip and having a great show with high energy and making the kids happy, and at the same time not burning a bridge with the administration. It's a very tough position to be in, and for that reason I'm glad I don't have to do that every Friday and Saturday night. It's difficult. It's tough.

R B: ...Looking at the SchoolDanceNetwork.com site right now, I see playlists and informational video, and there's basic stuff in there about texting codes, and "slanguage" so that both the DJs like myself—I'm 38 years old—can find out what the new slang is. I don't know what a lot of the phrasing would mean if someone texted to me, or when we use one of those text projection setups that puts text messages up on the screen for the kids. They could be saying something and I wouldn't know what it was.

RH: You're right.

RB: How are you getting the word out there to the school administrators and teachers? How are people hearing about School Dance Network, on that side of the equation, and also from the DJ's point of view?

RH: One of the biggest things that we have done is I was able to get myself scheduled at the National Principals' Conference in San Diego last year. So I had an opportunity to meet and greet and talk to school principals all over the country...I was able to learn a lot from them about the frustrations and the things that they're going through.

...Plus we do direct mail to the schools. We reach out to them and say, here's an opportunity for you to go online. And to the schools there's no charge. We ask them to register so we have kind of an idea of who and where our subscribers are, but we don't charge. Initially that was one of my learning curves. Originally I had a subscription fee to the schools, and I soon realized that with the budgets at schools, that wasn't going to fly. They just didn't have the budgets to support yet another thing regarding the dance program. So we made it free to them. The idea was not to make a fortune on this site, anyway. The idea was just to provide the information. So that's how we get the word out.

Another learning curve over this last year was not to totally approach this from the negative side, like the "do not play" list that's provided on the School Dance Network website. Rather than just say what you can't play, later on as we realized the need to know what CAN we play, what's appropriate, what's hot, what's happening.

And that's where we came up with this new idea in the spring of 2010, which was to create a safe playlist and present it in chart form. So you have the Top 30 most playable dance

songs that are appropriate to any age school. So that's kind of the new thing that we just threw out there. And it's funny how word catches on amongst schools, principals, activity coordinators. First of all, it spreads from one school to the whole district, and then that district goes to their state conference and then the word kind of spreads at the state conference that, here's a site that we can go to to find a great list of playable songs and at the same time the "do not play" list.

You also mentioned the text codes and there's also urban slang. All that came out of the idea that we wanted to create some more meat, some more content for this site beyond just songs you can't play and songs you can play. So we added some of those other things.

And one of the other things that we've added in there on the front page of the site is a bit of an updated blog-type feature that zeroes in on what schools are doing around the country to handle freak dancing and grinding, which is as much of a problem as the lyrical content at dances. In fact, maybe it's probably more of a problem because with lyrical content you can control that, you can work at making that better. With freak dancing it's a much tougher scenario. It's

so relative. The kids think freak dancing is one thing and the administration thinks it's another thing. So it's very difficult.

RB: How can DJs get involved with what you're doing? And are you helping DJs get the word out there that they're at least trying to be as clean as possible by working with you guys?

RH: Well...the other side of the School Dance Network site is that we have created a directory of responsible DJs, people who want to clearly state their policies and are ready to participate with the school administration to create a good,

fun, clean dance for their school. So, beyond getting the basic information, a DJ can also become a member of that.

There is a charge for it. It's very nominal, \$50 for a year. But what that offers you, first of all, is

potentially new business because hopefully schools will go to the directory and once they subscribe they will go on and say, I wonder who in our area is acting responsibly in terms of school dances.

And then the other thing is—and I've come to realize this as a DJ company myself—is that there's probably no better marketing tool than to market yourself as clean and ready to assist the school administrators in handling the problems that they're facing. You know, there were the days when I put out the brochures saying we had the biggest light show and we had the best sound system and we had the biggest music variety and all of those things. And then you'd send out a brochure with, "Sign up for all your dances and get \$50 off." All of those marketing things that DJs can and do do are nice. But nothing has been more effective, as far as I'm concerned, than to be boldly going forth saying you're aware of and concerned with helping the administration to create a good, fun dance that the kids will like.

We provide DJs with a logo they can put on their website and brochures that tells people you're member of the School Dance Network, and in essence that you're a responsible DJ.

RB: So, the idea is that you're working with the schools to make sure things are appropriate and clean, that everybody can have fun, which in the end means more business for the disc jockey service. The schools are going to be more excited because they're going to have more kids at the dances and they're going to schedule more dances because you're making the kids happy and the administration happy—both the audience that's having fun and hopefully the administration, the people that are paying the bills.

Any other parting words you want to say, Ric, about getting involved in this group?

RH: Only that I would encourage everyone—whether or not you become a member of the School Dance Network is irrelevant—that the important thing is, as an industry, that we recognize the problem, we face it, and we work together to help make better dances for schools across the country. **MB**



We either dance around the issues...or we face them head-on

THE SCHOOL DANCE TOP 30

SCHOOL DANCE TOP 30

	ARTIST	FEATURING	TRACK
1	USHER	WILL.I.AM	OMG
2	KATY PERRY	SNOOP DOG	CALIFORNIA GURLS
3	TAIO CRUZ		DYNAMITE
4	B.O.B	HAYLEY WILLIAMS	AIRPLANES
Edit required			
5	LADY GAGA		ALAJANDRO
6	TAO CRUZ	LUDACRIS	BREAK YOUR HEART
7	BLACK EYED PEAS		ROCK THAT BODY
8	MIKE POSNER		COOLER THAN ME
9	TRAVIE MCCOY	BRUNO MARS	BILLIONAIRE
10	USHER	PITBULL	DJ GOT US FALLIN IN LOVE
Make sure that you have an edit at 1:25 for mother f*****			
11	EMINEM	RIHANNA	LOVE THE WAY YOU LIE
This is song is loaded with F-bombs at :47 1:52, 3:32, 3:43. Content is about abuse. Not good for middle schools. Lots of airplay. Play at your own risk.			
12	DRAKE		FIND YOUR LOVE
13	READY SET		LOVE LIKE WOE
14	JASON DERULA		RIDIN SOLO
Edit out s**t			
15	NICKI MINAJ		YOUR LOVE
16	SEAN KINGSTON		LETTING GO (DUTTY LOVE)
Dutty is slang for Dirty			
17	3OH!3	KE\$HA	MY FIRST KISS
18	DAVID GUETTA	FERGIE & LMFAO	GETTING OVER YOU
19	B.O.B	RIVERS CUOMO	MAGIC
20	ENRIQUE IGLESIAS	PITBULL	I LIKE IT
21	NEW BOYZ	IYAZ	BREAK MY BANK
Edits needed a** at 1:41 and s**t at :47			
22	FLO RIDA	D GUETTA	CLUB CAN'T HANDLE ME
23	KE\$HA		YOUR LOVE IS MY DRUG
24	JAY-Z	MR. HUDSON	YOUNG FOREVER
Edit required			
25	JUSTIN BIEBER		SOMEBODY TO LOVE
26	CHITTY BANG		OPPOSITE OF ADULTS
27	SOHIA FRESH	T-PAIN	THIS INSTANT
Great dance-along song			
28	NE YO		BEAUTIFUL MONSTER
29	JASON DERULA		IN MY HEAD
30	CALI SWAG DISTRICT		TEACH ME HOW TO DOUGIE
Yes it is a new dance. The term "dougie" derives from the name of 80's early 90's Hip Hopper Doug-E- Fresh. The term "dougie" means to have a cool or hip stlye. Swag, Swagger originated in Dallas			
EXTRA	KESHA		TAKE IT OFF
Yes she is talking about clothes. Okay for High school but NOT for Middle school			



RECURRENTS (STILL POPULAR, BUT OFF CHART)

JUSTIN BIEBER FEAT. LUDACRIS	BABY
LAROUX	BULLETPROOF
LADY GAGA	BAD ROMANCE
TIMBERLAND FEAT. KATY PERRY	IF WE EVER MEET AGAIN
KE\$HA	TIC TOC
TIMBERLAND	CARRY OUT
CHRISTINA AGUILERA	NOT MYSELF TONIGHT
SELENA GOMEZ & THE SCENE	NATURALLY
BLACK EYED PEAS	IMMA BE
B.O.B. FEAT. BRUNO MARS	NOTHING ON YOU
TREY SONGZ	SAY AAH

DO NOT PLAY - ADDS

RICK ROSS Tons of F-bombs. Not editable.	BLOWIN MONEY FAST
GLASSES MALONE	I GET DOE
SOULJA BOY "Girls on my d**k" makes it unacceptable	PRETTY BOY SWAG
KANYE WEST	POWER

Small Kraft Warning

BE ON THE LOOKOUT: TEEN ENTERTAINER DJ KRAFT HAS TAKEN TO THE HIGH SEAS OF PRO DJING

BY MIKE "DR. FRANKENSTAND" RYAN •

Carl Botha, a.k.a. DJ Kraft, has not quite passed one-and-a-half decades in age, but he is already a DJ who is serious about his craft. Playing school dances with true skills and a truly professional sound and lighting setup, he is making a name for himself in and around Calgary, Alberta, Canada, as well as worldwide on YouTube. I made the connection with Carl when, in his quest for the best gear, he checked out Frankenstands, my own company, which produces pneumatically "powered" speaker/lighting stands.

Turning the "turntables" on this young DJ, I asked him what advice HE would give to a preteen DJ just starting out. (See sidebar...there are more and more of them!) "Ha, ha...8 and 9 year olds?" asked the young DJ Kraft. "I just looked up some [YouTube] videos and they look pretty serious. I think there are several things I would tell any young DJs. First, educate yourself, then set goals for yourself, and look at what the older guys are doing. Take that and develop it into your own style, your own setup. Buy nice equipment, not the cheap stuff that breaks after a few months. Lastly, keep your cool under fire. It's those things that I'm still struggling with and that I would warn any DJ of, especially at a younger age when it's easier to learn."

Mike Ryan: So, what attracted you to DJing?

DJ Kraft: In the beginning it was just the idea of working with huge speakers. I love music, I love sound and thought huge speakers would be an expansion on my love for music. (Then) at a school dance the DJ played old school stuff; I'm talking "Chicken Dance," "YMCA," and all that junk. I felt that I could have done a better job, and for a lesser price than what the school was already paying. I never intended for this to become a full-time career, although I will always pursue DJing and my passion for music..

M R: How did you learn about DJ equipment?

DJ K: I just googled "DJ Equipment in Calgary." After going through a few websites, I found Axe Music [The major Canadian retailer, at www.axemusic.com – Ed.]. I talked to a guy named Trevor who taught me a lot about what I should be buying.

In terms of educating myself, I learned by embarrassment really. I was going to purchase a "Battle DJ Pack" and a set of studio monitors. My lack of knowledge showed immediately, I was asking for two tiny speakers for a school dance upwards of 200 people (imagine two 8-inch monitor speakers on a table and your audience is expecting 18-inch Cerwin Vega subs).



After that I spent hours on YouTube watching DJ experts like Brian Redd and Ellaskins "The DJ Tutor," and found what I needed to get. I realized that I can't just get the cheap stuff. A few weeks later I bought myself a Vestax VCI-300.

M R: How did you learn to DJ?

DJ K: I taught myself. When I was working with the [Numark] Omni Control I learned about loops, some very basic scratching, and transitions. When I started working with the VCI-300 I got a bit better at scratching, although it's still nothing compared to the veteran DJs. I'm looking into possibly taking a few lessons on club DJing, but for now my knowledge on DJing has solely been uncountable hours of practice.

M R: Have you had any "challenges" while DJing?

DJ K: At a recent school dance I set my play list [for] the real dancing to begin 30 minutes into the dance because everyone tends to be fashionably late. So 30 minutes in—on this very pivotal point in the dance—my DJ program crashed. I cut the music and had to announce that the computer just broke. I had updated my software just the night before—big mistake. The rest of the night, every time my computer "jumped" a bit or something loaded just a second too long I freaked. I also started hearing things, like songs on my right deck playing in a lower key. I swear I almost went through an entire pack of gum after that glitch.

M R: How did you get the name DJ Kraft?

DJ K: Last summer, some friends and I took a 46-foot sail boat to Antigua where it would be taken out of the water to keep it safe for the hurricane season. While cooking a meal for the crew, I experimented with cheese, which made one of my ship mates comment, "You should work for Kraft Cheese." They all knew I was looking for a DJ name, and when I asked them they all said "DJ Kraft." So the name was created off the coast of my favorite island (St. Barts), and has stuck to me since.

M R: You mentioned watching an older DJ playing "old school junk." Are we older DJs out of touch with the kind of music you



and your peers are listening to and dancing to?

DJ K: I think that some are. I go through a process that is indescribable in my head which allows me to choose music. A lot of kids get music illegally these days, so the remixes and types of music could very well not be in the charts. Then again it's who you hang out with. I listen to music day in and day out and before a gig I'll take maybe 4-10 hours to make a play list. School dances are not the place to have the "Chicken Dance, or "YMCA"—it's the place to play some radio stuff, a bit of club music, and possibly introduce what I like, or what I think will be popular. It's a DJ's job to not only play today's hits, but also tomorrow's hits...It's the older DJs that tend to be out of sync with new music.

M R: What's in your music library? Do you have wedding music, songs for the grandparents? How far back in music do you go?

DJ K: Well, it depends on if anyone would trust a 14-year-old with their wedding music and how old that grandma is. I have plenty of music to cater for people from ages 12-50. A lot of cocktail music, then for dancing its simple—either club or old dancing junk. My library goes back to the 50s.

M R: What do your parents think of your DJing? Are they supportive?

DJ K: In the beginning, my dad was very supportive, but my mom was a bit unsure. But I've really proven myself to them. My parents were at a gig long enough to see me in action and their support has stuck ever since.

M R: What do you think about music with questionable lyrics? What do your peers think?

DJ K: I'm all for the explicit versions. The radio edits are TERRIBLE and can kill the mood behind the song. My VCI-300 allows me to censor the music on the fly, without stopping the beat or cutting the music, just playing the words backwards.

M R: What do your peers think of your DJing? Are you a rock star in your school?

DJ K: A lot of kids think I don't DJ, that I just play music and press buttons and I don't blame them, I do just that. Some kids are jealous, like I've beaten them at something. They think I'm just some rich kid. I can tell you that EVERY PENNY that I've spent on DJing has been hard-earned. Then there's people who think it's really cool, and they ask me how things work and how I've done all of this."

M R: What do you get out of DJing? How does it make you feel to entertain?

DJ K: I get a good laugh, some fun and I grow the capacity to challenge myself and raise myself to new heights. I used to have stage fright when I played in a band but when I DJ that stage fright goes away. I also consider myself to be tech-savvy, so being able to program and manipulate my equipment is truly amazing to me. DJing is a way for me to have fun, release stress, and just burn some time doing what I love most." **MB**

Note: Because of Botha's age I asked and received permission to interview him for this article from his father Dr. Daniel Botha. - M.R.

Young at the Art

Hey DJs, if you think you have competition now, just wait: There's a whole new generation of kids spinning and scratching with aplomb waiting in queue. A quick search on YouTube reveals oodles of "stage parents" claiming that their kid is the "World's Youngest DJ." I quit looking after 60, all of them under 10 years old. Some of them even have DJ monikers such as Whippa Snappa, DJ Brat, DJ Doo Doo (a two-year-old!) and my favorite: DJ Dirty Diapers.

When asked where he got his DJ equipment, one of those kid DJs, six-year-old DJ Ian, responded, "Santa got me these turntables." DJ Ian has reportedly been DJing since he was four. There is a YouTube video of him speaking on the microphone and adjusting his intelligent lights.

Seven-year-old UK DJ prodigy, Jack Hill, also known as DJ Jack ON the Box, because he has to stand on a box to reach the controls, is officially listed as the "youngest club DJ" according to Guinness World Records. He has been spinning records since the age of three.

All of this makes my interview subject, Canadian DJ Carl Botha, a.k.a. DJ Kraft, seem almost ancient amidst this field of mini-DJs, at the ripe old age of 14 years old!

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Fitness for DJs: Tuning Up the Entertainer

MAINTAINING YOUR MOST IMPORTANT PIECE OF EQUIPMENT: YOU

BY PAUL "DJ RUDE" PERVANO, SR. •

I like scanning bridal websites to read what brides are saying about their upcoming or recently past wedding receptions. I'm always looking for ways to improve my performance, skills and of course ways to make more money.

One of the things that I have noticed that brides often comment on is the appearance of the DJ. One bride complained of a DJ who was "fat and sweaty" and how she was disgusted by it. "He was out there running around, making announcements," she continued, "and when he did the Cha Cha Slide, he was so sweaty and exhausted he was huffing and puffing, and he couldn't even talk right." Another bride witnessed a DJ in a similar situation, and while this DJ wasn't extremely overweight, he was clearly not fit enough to handle the rigors that the job can entail.

TIME WON'T GIVE ME TIME

The most overlooked aspects of our lives as mobile entertainers are our health and fitness. Most DJs have very busy schedules every day, dealing with our families, friends, errands, appointments and work. Besides being DJs, some of us may even have other careers. Fitness is something that gets pushed to the back burner because our schedules seem to not permit time for it.

While we're busy running around trying to get things done we often find that we don't have time to prepare something healthy to eat. In this age of convenience we feel compelled to stop for a quick burger and even when we do have time at home, we will often order in a pizza to eat with the family. Good home-cooked meals seem to be becoming a thing of the past. The obesity rate in this country has skyrocketed because our desired for convenience has overtaken our desire to be healthy.

A BILLION REASONS

We CAN become healthy and fit: It is not impossible. All it takes is getting yourself motivated. Easier said than done you say? Think about a quick trip to the hospital for a

little triple bypass operation because for the last 20 years you couldn't forego the triple cheeseburger addiction! How's that for a motivator?

Before you think that it can't happen to you just take a look at the statistics: According to the World Health Organization: More than 1 billion people in the world are overweight with over 300 million of these being obese.

Obesity and overweight pose a major risk for chronic diseases, including type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, stroke, and certain forms of cancer.

The key causes are increased consumption of energy-dense foods high in saturated fats and sugars, and reduced physical activity

1 billion people in the world are considered overweight? That's about 15% of the world's population! So what can we do to prevent this from happening to us? And what can we do if this has already happened to us? First off, always consult with your physician before starting any exercise regimen to see where you can start and what you can do.

If you are able to follow these steps, soon you will be looking toward a better, more healthy life. You will feel the difference within weeks.

NUTRITION

The first thing you may want to examine are your eating habits. Do you eat at least three meals per day? Many people only eat actual meals only twice a day, along with a few high-fat, high-sugar snacks in between. Ideally you want to eat 5 to 7 small meals a day. This is not a "diet." I do not believe in diets. They don't last, therefore they don't work. This is a lifestyle, not a diet. In order to stay fit and healthy you will need to adhere to this for the duration of your life. This is not to say you can't have a hamburger or pizza occasionally; the point is moderation. Eat that bowl of ice cream but forego the second bowl, lay off the candy bar if you've already had one, etc.

In order to maintain good health we need to eat foods that are high in fiber, low in fat. Eat meats that are high in protein and low in fat to maintain the lean muscle mass that is essential for active DJ performance

(not to mention moving gear around!). In a future article I will outline some good meal examples.

EXERCISE

The single best exercise in my opinion is swimming; it provides a full body workout, including your cardiovascular system, all at once. If you don't have access to a pool then walking/jogging is the next best thing. I recommend starting at about 15-30 minutes per day. Try to include brisk walking or sprinting to get your heart rate to within 80 percent of your maximum at least twice during your session; this is called interval training and helps you build stamina, among other things. You may consider buying a heart rate monitor if you are not using a treadmill equipped with one.

Calisthenics are a great "old fashioned" way to get started. If you are just getting started with serious exercise, I recommend working with your own body weight before working with iron weights. Push-ups, pull-ups, sit-ups, squats, dips, lunges and other body-weight exercises will prepare you for more advance weight training should you decide to take it that far.

If all you want to do is maintain is good weight, tone and overall health without packing on too much extra muscle, stick to body weight exercises and cardiovascular exercise such as swimming and walking/running. Make sure you eat properly and regularly, as this augments your exercise regimen and keeps you well balanced.

Once you get started on creating a health and fitness-oriented lifestyle, you will begin to notice improvement in a short time. Experts differ on how long it takes to break old habits and start new ones, but it could take as few as 40 days according to some. When you're tempted to give up, remember the negative motivation mentioned earlier (triple cheeseburgers = triple bypass), plus keep the new positives you'll be experiencing clearly in mind. You'll have more energy and stamina, and you'll also likely notice that your back feels a lot stronger and less painful when you are carrying those heavy speakers into the venue! **ME**

Paul "DJ RuDe" Pervano, Sr. spent his younger years studying music and martial arts. He began DJing at 17, served in the Army, and afterwards attended college. His second job was always DJ/KJ, bouncer or mobile DJ. He now owns Unique Entertainment Enterprises Mobile DJs & Karaoke, specializing in weddings and providing DJ/KJ services for clubs, bars and restaurants. Check out Paul's YouTube channel for DJ tutorials and his Fitness for DJs segment. Catch him on Facebook at www.facebook.com/DJ.RuDe.



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MORE POWER TO YOU

Yamaha's new **DSR active loudspeaker line** incorporates DSP effects and all-new high performance Class-D amplifiers. The series, including the compact and lightweight full-range DSR112, DSR115 and DSR215, along with the DSR118W subwoofer, include innovations like Integral Digital Tuning, Intelligent Dynamic Control, Powerful Digital Drive and extensive DSP protection.

Integral Digital Tuning helps deliver super-clear, high definition sound quality via high-performance 48-bit digital signal processing. A digital crossover network uses high-order FIR (Finite Impulse Response) filters for linear phase response.

Intelligent Dynamic Control enhances sound quality with the D-CONTOUR multi-band dynamic processor that

monitors output levels and varies the amount of boost in each frequency band, providing an ideal balance of dynamic sound with consistent clarity at all volume levels. Go to the Yamaha website for more on the DSR Series' extensive digital feature set.

www.yamaha.com/livesound



MOONFLOWER MANIA!

It's been called a "moonflower on steroids," with 256 red, green, blue and white LEDs shooting out beams through 4 lenses.

American DJ's new **Hyper Gem LED** is a 4-way DMX-controllable, portable moonflower, with a wide sweep of unique patterns. Featuring a 24° high and 94° wide beam angle, its sharp, brilliant beams completely cover the dance floor at a mid-sized venue, making it an ideal effect for any DJ, entertainer or club. It also includes a multi-color strobe effect.



The unit is another evolution of a previous model, now using 100,000-hour-rated LEDs as its light source. With no moving parts, it is built to last and virtually maintenance-free. It will run as a sound-activated effect to its own built-in programs. Up to 16 Hyper Gem LED

units can be linked together, master-slave. American DJ's compatible UC3 remote controller (sold separately) provides control over basic functions like blackout, strobe and program selection. More experienced operators can program the fixture via one of 2 DMX modes (4-channel or 256-channel). A convenient 4-button LED display on the rear panel allows easy scrolling through DMX settings.

Optimized for mobile use, the Hyper Gem LED weighs just 11 lbs. and measures 20.75" x 12.5" x 9.5". A hanging bracket and multi-voltage operation (100-240V, 50/60Hz, IEC plug) make it ready for duty anywhere.

www.americandj.com

PETITE FAMILY EXPANDS

Following up on the success of the SlimPAR™ 56 fixture, **CHAUVET®** has added two new fixtures to the SlimPAR™ family: **SlimPAR™ 38** and **SlimPAR™ 64**. Each unit is an LED PAR fixture with a very slim casing (only 2.5" thick) making them easy to transport. This unit can fit almost anywhere in a DJ's rig. The fixtures offer 3 or 7 channels of DMX control, or use built-in automated and sound-activated programs. A pulse effect with adjustable speed is also provided. They offer static colors and RGB color mixing with or without DMX. Built-in power linking makes for quick set up and break down.



SlimPAR™ 38 features 75 red, green and blue LEDs and up to 43 units can be connected, while SlimPAR™ 64 features 180 red, green and blue LEDs and up to 22 units can be connected.

5 SlimPAR units fill the space of one traditional PAR can. They all weigh less than 3 pounds and, when placed on their unfolded mounting brackets, stand only 7 inches high. All 3 draw less a quarter of an ampere or less. This means 80 units can run on the same circuit.

Easily packed in road cases these fixtures are perfect for uplighting, area washes or as truss warmers. They remember the last setting applied, so you can just plug them in at the next gig, maximizing your set-up time. They also work with the intuitive Obey™ 3 (sold separately).

www.chauvetlighting.com

KEY TO HANDHELD RECORDING

iKey Audio, a division of GCI Technologies, unveils a new **portable digital recorder**, the **HDR7**, that offers more than many other units in its class. This recorder fits in the palm of your hand and can go anywhere. It captures high-quality recordings of live performances, interviews, podcasts, meetings, seminars, sound effects, or anything else you can think of.

As for basic features, the unit records MP3s at 3 different bit rates, WAV files (up to 24-bit/96kHz), AIFF, and AAC files. Sound is captured by built-in high-quality condenser mics in an X/Y configuration, with a sensitivity switch, auto-compression/limiting and Auto Gain Control). A VU meter provides visual feedback for level adjustment. For storage, an SD/SDHC slot accepts cards up to 32GB. Mic and line inputs, plus headphone and line out jacks are provided. A USB port connects the unit to your PC to transfer and edit files. The unit runs on AA battery or AC.

Beyond the core feature set are: a full-color jumbo LCD screen; direct recording to USB thumb drive; on-board file conversion; Auto-Record and Auto-Track Mark functions; adjustable Mark or File Timer modes; a noise gate; 5-second pre-record buffer; and a built-in instrument tuner.

A generous selection of accessories comes with the unit, including a tripod stand, AC adapter, wind screen, four AA batteries, cloth carrying case, USB cable, and a 1GB SD card for recording out of the box.



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You Just Have to Ask...

A NEW COLUMN ATTEMPTING TO ANTICIPATE TRENDS AND SPIN THE DJ WORLD FORWARD...

BY MICHAEL EDWARDS •

Starting with this issue, our newest series, "Ahead of the Curve" will examine new ideas and "outside the box" approaches to being a more successful mobile DJ.

This wide ranging effort will include discussions of new gear we'd like to see and ground-breaking technologies we wish were available to us. It will also critique advantages and limitations of DJ gear, examine new trends, and offer innovative business tips to help you stay at the top of your game and ahead of the competition.

"Ahead of the Curve" will also give you the opportunity to email us your own wish lists for DJ equipment (technology and features that you WISH were available to you, but currently are not), and other innovations you'd like to share with your peers. When you think about it, often many DJs may share a common need for something that the manufacturers haven't caught onto yet. Perhaps it's a modification to better fit the needs of DJs. So put on your thinking caps and come up with some great ideas for stuff you haven't been able to find anywhere... no matter how weird you think it may be. We'll discuss the best ones in every issue.

GETTING IT ALL TOGETHER

To kick off the series, let's discuss something that's really taken off in recent years: the on-site wedding ceremony. This requires the DJ to set up another sound system in a separate location from the main reception. Have you ever lugged all your gear onto a beach across the sand for an ocean-side ceremony? Did you have to bring 200 yards of AC extension cords? How about an outdoor wedding deep in the woods, on a mountain, or in a large gazebo down by the lake? Wouldn't those ceremonies be a lot easier if you had a light-weight, optionally battery powered, one-piece 300-watt sound system with everything you need built in? I mean a built-in mixer, flexible line inputs on separate channels for your computer, MP3 player, a musical instrument or a CD player, and multiple balanced microphone channels with separate EQ and volume. Also, it would have built-in wireless receivers for wireless lavs on the officiant and the groom, plus



hard-wired handheld mics for the DJ and for any readings. I'm not talking about a large rack of heavy gear here...I mean ONE PIECE that contains everything including the power.

A wedding ceremony is never a high-volume situation. If Bose can make the L1 Compact system sound great at 28 pounds, I'm betting that if such a small, flexible, but high-quality "turn-key" PA system existed, many of us would make the investment. It would also be a great emergency back-up system waiting in the van for power failures. Email the features you'd like to see added to it or the ones you feel are unnecessary. How much would you pay for it?

ON THE RIGHT TRACK

To start the thought process, let's examine some gear that currently exists. Roland (www.rolandus.com) already has a nice little battery-powered PA, the BA-330 (at about \$599), which can play for up to 10 hours, depending on the type of batteries used. It can also be mounted on a speaker stand. Nice size and a good place to start our idea.

Carvin (www.carvin.com) makes an 8-channel, 500-watt powered mixer (model XP-800L, \$895 list) available with dual built-in/removable wireless receivers and folding antennas that pop up out of the top; very cool idea. But you still need to lug at least one passive speaker. I'd want it to be true diversity for each channel, but the idea is a solid step forward.

Combine the best features of both these two products and we'd be very close to having our fantasy ceremony system, right? Now you get the idea of this new series: If something doesn't exist, let's bat around design ideas and features we need and get a lot of input from the very DJs who'd be the ones buying it. And then we'll see which manufacturer picks up the ball and runs with it.

But it all starts with you, our loyal MB readers. Send us your opinion of this ceremony system idea and please feel free to add your own innovative ideas on other DJ gear, music subscription services, software, new accessories you'd like to see, or anything else you think might help build a better mousetrap for all mobile DJs.

We'll compile the best ideas and concepts and use this space to state our needs as an industry...and then let the manufacturers act on them. We may even get some inside info on upcoming products in the design phase. Or, dare I say, we might get to test and evaluate the prototypes here before they go into full production.

Do you feel powerful yet? You only have to think it up and ask for it. As long as it's something the manufacturers can see is needed by many, we may see some great results. **MB**

Michael Edwards is the owner of AllStar Entertainment & UpLighting, a licensed and bonded musical entertainment agency located in Andover, MA. Full-time since 1979, Mike and his 20 AllStar DJs specialize in Boston-area weddings. He can be contacted at 978-470-4700 or emailed at [SET UP NEW MB EMAIL FOR MIKE]. His websites are www.getadj.com and www.getuplights.com and both feature a few "ahead of the curve" ideas of their own.



Here we take a glance at the tools that make DJs successful. Give us quick descriptions of how you use your tools and why they are essential equipment for your business. Gear, gadgets, software, websites—anything is fair game. Send your list to toolbox@mobilebeat.com

CHRIS BEDKE, CREATIVE DEEJAYS

Mobile/Club DJ and Mobile Beat Writer

Google Voice Google Voice is completely free and gives you a local telephone number that can be routed to another phone number of your choice (Home, Cell, Business). It allows me to enter my contacts and keeps track of phone calls, e-mails (GMail) and allows me to send text messages to any cell phone from my computer without knowing the cell carrier (a great tool for keeping in contact with brides). Google Voice can be set-up to answer your cell phone or business line voice-mail and it will transcribe the message and send it to you as an e-mail and text message on your cell. It also allows you to screen incoming calls and send them to voicemail while still listening to the message. If you decide you need to talk to the caller after hearing part of the message, you can intercept it by pressing * (star). Other features include call recording, call blocking, custom greetings for specific callers and free long distance calls. I use my google voice number as my "personal number" for clients to reach me. To get google voice, go to www.google.com and set-up an account, then go to the google voice link.

Vonage I switched my business line from a Land Line to Vonage. If you already have a High Speed internet connection, this phone company will save you money. My two business lines cost less than \$60/month. Vonage has some great features including "SimulRing" that allows me to choose up to 5 other phone numbers to ring simultaneously. I have mine set-up to ring to the office and my cell phone.

Platinum Notes Software (www.platinumnotes.com) About 2 years ago, I decided to abandon mp3's and switch back to quality sound using .wav files. This software fixes issues with music files and makes them sound great! I have converted all my heavy play mp3's back to .wav. 2TB drive are under \$200 now, so the choice was easy.

Kall 8 (www.kall8.com) This is my toll-free number provider. For \$2/month and 7 cents a minute, I get a toll free number with a ton of features like custom routing, real-time call tracking and voice-mail message delivery to my e-mail box. I have a toll-free fax line that receives faxes 24/7 without a dedicated fax machine. Kall 8 delivers the fax to my inbox as a .PDF file. This saves money on having a dedicated phone number for a fax machine.

Buzz Off! I use this device whenever I have an annoying buzz at a venue. Simply plug it in between you mixer and amplifier or powered speaker and the buzz goes away. The device was under \$50 and most pro audio dealers carry them. **MB**

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Take Us To Warp Drive!

EXPLORING NEW WORLDS OF LIGHTING WITH METEOR'S NEW LED WARP DRIVE

BY MARTI DEBERGI •

There are a number of suppliers and manufacturers that have been serving the mobile DJ industry since its infancy. One of these companies is Meteor Lighting, which was a popular disco light supplier in its own formative years and has now expanded into the LED effect market. The company's newest release geared towards mobile DJs is the LED Warp Drive—an effect that has been engineered with ruggedness, geometry, and the working DJ in mind.

BEAMING DOWN TO THE SURFACE

An almost refreshing feature of the light is its simplicity and understated shell. It does not have bright white lettering announcing its manufacturer or model name, and blends in well when not in use. A classy feature for things like dinner hour at a wedding reception. It is also short in height and lightweight, making the light very versatile in any application, whether on a truss, tripod, or even the ground.

Ordinarily it would not be advisable to set effects lights on the ground, especially at a wedding. While it is a quite visually pleasing angle, especially for effect lighting, most of the time lights do not withstand accidental kicks very well and can get very hot (kids, of course, love to touch hot lights). However, the

LED Warp Drive, it seems, has been made to be ready for the rigors of what I like to call the 45 Degree Floor Shot, with its rigid metal construction, low-heat LED operation, and reinforced lenses (which, I might add, were tested at one of my gigs by an inebriated

guest's accidental cowboy boot toe).

THE FUTURE IS NOW: LED

All that ready-for-the-road ruggedness is great, but a light needs, well light. In this case, the LED Warp Drive is powered by 256 LEDs (in 4 matrices of 64) and "projected" through 4 lenses. The key to the effect, though, is the geometry of the angles of the lenses combined with the patterns of the individual LEDs in the matrices. What is produced is akin to a mirror-scan effect—but for a fraction of the hassle of actually dealing with a mirror scanner. And for the few remaining LED brightness skeptics out there, the effect this unit creates was clear with or without fog.

Even with all of those LEDs, the maximum power draw is only 25W, so many of the fixtures can be chained or arrayed



together on the same circuit when doing large events (which is also made convenient by the inclusion of a power output port on the back of the light). Controlling multiple fixtures would also be easy, as the unit can operate either in sound-active mode, pre-programmed stand-alone mode, or in 6-channel DMX mode (all-handily selectable via LED readout on the rear of the unit).

Another attribute the Warp Drive shares with other LED lighting fixtures, which is always worth mentioning, is the lack of a duty cycle. So, not only can the kids touch it on the floor, but it can go straight from dance floor to van after the gig.

BOLDLY GOING...

Over the course of a month, I discovered some of the LED Warp Drive's other virtues and challenges. I could fly it, rig it to my speaker stands, or even, as I mentioned before, put it on the ground and let the kids stare at it and touch it for the better portion of the evening without many worries. One slight drawback, though, was the sharpness of the metal corners in the rear of the fixture, which did happen to catch on my tux pants. As with anything though, this was easily fixed with gaffer's tape. I simply applied a tiny piece to the corner and (sorry Emeril)...BAM—a solution.

More than just good technology, this light represents a company that was a major player in the early years of mobile DJing in the US, but has not maintained front-of-mind awareness in the US market, even while they've put out many innovative products. (Originally a UK firm, with production later moved to the US, Meteor's primary market remains in Europe.) Many American industry veterans are still using Meteor lights they acquired in the late 1970s and 1980s—a testament to the durability of the Meteor product. The LED Warp Drive certainly stands in that tradition, and will potentially introduce a new generation of DJs to Meteor. **MB**

LED WARP DRIVE DATA

Number of LEDs: 256 (64 Red, 64 Green, 64 Blue, 32 Amber, 32 White)

Total power consumption: 25W max

Dimensions (W x H x D): with bracket 19" x 7" x 7.5"

Weight: 9 lbs

Sound Active, with built-in mic

6-channel DMX

www.meteor-global.com

Lighting Your Way to More Profit

The success that some entertainment companies have enjoyed with the addition of event based lighting, up-lighting, and custom lighting design has been well documented in the pages of this publication. This has included the notion that after the initial investment is recouped on the cost of the fixtures used, the profit margin in lighting is rather large.

Still, there are those who have yet to grasp this opportunity—and there are even some who have purchased the equipment but have no idea where to even begin. In both cases, the new ProAcademy Series: Event Lighting educational DVD has been produced to, ahem, en-light-ten those remaining in darkness.

RESIDENT EXPERT

Ben Stowe, the creator of this DVD, is well known in the industry as an expert in the sound and lighting fields. Possessing both an electrical contractor's license (State of Minnesota) and the much-coveted Infocom CTS certification, among many others, Ben is often asked to share his lighting insights at trade shows, meetings, and in entertainment publications. He gained his knowledge throughout a youth of tinkering, and later in the practical "school" of daily business that resulted from founding and running of one of the industry's leading gear suppliers, NLFX Professional (formerly Northernlight FX).

During his years of selling gear, Ben has often been asked for tips, tricks and hints on operating the fixtures he sells. People have also picked his brain about the best ways to set up and program their lighting. All of which led to the birth of the NLFX ProAcademy at the Mobile Beat Vegas trade show, and now to the Event Lighting DVD. The disc covers not only the physical operation and uses of a variety of lighting fixtures, but also the psychology, physiology and philosophy of lighting.

THE WHOLE PICTURE

As an introductory piece, the DVD touches on a lot of important subjects that DJs who sell lighting packages or upgrades should know about, in order to better serve their clients and, in turn,

make more money. Ben discusses everything from the scientific properties of light and physics of light shows to the various types of fixtures, bulbs, set-up procedures (and the reasoning behind them), controllers, DMX, and the electrical power required to run various forms of light shows.

Along the way, the video also has cut-ins from various implementers of the relatively new trend of up-selling lighting packages as well as a few other lighting experts. The guest appearances affirm the notion that while the science behind lighting is solid, producing a light show is indeed an art, with no definitively right or wrong way to actually implement it. The overall perspective comes across that almost anyone (albeit with a bit of training) can operate and understand lighting.

GET REAL

Many products are marketed to DJs but are never used to their full potential due to lack of understanding. The Event Lighting DVD lets viewers take in the information at their own pace (especially helpful for the more technical stuff) and hopefully use the ideas successfully once they fully understand the subject.

One of the best aspects of the disc is the use of real-world terminology and testimonials from real people who have used the presented ideas to benefit their businesses. Ben does his best to explain things not only in technical "geek speak," but also give one or two examples of the idea to drive his point home in layman's terms.

And while grounded in science, the presentation also features some humor to avoid the boredom factor. At times the added entertainment means the campiness level is elevated (high-speed moments a la Benny Hill for example), but none of it gets in the way of the solid content.

No matter how experienced they are, no DJ is ever beyond the need for further education. Even with 10 years as a DJ under my belt, I learned quite a bit from this DVD, including many things I simply never took the time to absorb as a student of the lighting game.

It is true that lighting can be a tricky subject—hence this ProAcademy Series: Event Lighting DVD. But there's a clear message here, backed up by plenty of hard science and helpful hints: Come toward the light and your profit margins will ascend toward the heavens. **MB**

www.proacademyseries.com

PROACADEMY'S EVENT LIGHTING DVD PRESENTS SEMINAR KNOWLEDGE IN A USEFUL, PORTABLE FORMAT

BY J. RICHARD ROBERTS •

Lighting Up Your Facade

THE FACIED GIVES MOBILE DJS A NEW OPPORTUNITY FOR VISUAL EXCITEMENT

BY MARC ANDREWS •

Over the last twenty years many, if not most DJs have gone from setting up their DJ systems on table tops to using various forms of cover-up for their equipment.

Previous approaches have been available from Showcase Designs and other companies that made carpet-covered, folding-front boards that could be set up in front of the DJ tables and often had some rope light embedded in a cool design that lit up. DJ Skirts takes the cloth route with fitted table skirts, facades made of cloth and piping, and other innovative products.

Enter: a new concept in mobile DJ booths, one that ups the visual ante. It's a new generation of frontboard hardware that truly adds extra excitement to the pre-



sentation, going beyond simply making it look nice by covering up and dressing up.

Known as the FaCIEd, the product provides a decorative facade in front of your DJ station that covers up the equipment, plus, adds an area that can display LED back-lighting that is dancing to the music or programmed with DMX, or just setting a mood for the room with a color wash. It's not high tech but that's what is making the FaCIE a more and more popular option for DJs. The key to this product's success is its strong wood frames and great light-conducting Lycra fabric.

Steve Cie, the creator of the FaCIEd, highly recommends using a wash light system like the CHAUVET 4-Bar head (sans tripod) behind the unit to light it up and give

some action to the frontboard. We have used four American DJ Par 64 LED cans on a basic fade back and forth between colors and cans and it has given a great effect. Ideally it would be great to have something like the old all-in-one American DJ Quatro light except with four Par 36 LED cans.

The standard FaCIEd model is a four-panel, 30" wide by 48" high front board with black trim, for \$399.95. Additional white fabric panels are \$125.95 each. The CIE Class (\$595.95) is a step up, with a five-panel 30" wide by 54" high front board. It is available in three styles: Traditional, featuring black trim with white fabric; the Black Beauty, featuring black trim with black fabric; and the White Wedding, with white trim and white fabric. Additional panels for this series are \$149.95 each. Given the aesthetic nature of the FaCIEd it makes a lot of sense to get the specially designed padded case as well. A complete list of options can be found at www.facied.com.

This is a product that is definitely worth seeing in person at a gig or trade-show like Mobile Beat's Las Vegas conference. Check it out and see how good it can make a DJ look. **MB**

www.facied.com

2010: A Screen from Odyssey

KNOWN BY MANY AS A PURVEYOR OF CASES, ODYSSEY INNOVATIVE DESIGNS DOES A LOT MORE, AS EVIDENCED BY THEIR NEW MOBILE VIDEO SCREEN SYSTEM

BY MARC ANDREWS •

Unveiled to the DJ world at the Mobile Beat Las Vegas conference this past February, the Odyssey Mobile Video Screen System is a complete system for rear or front projection of music videos, wedding montages or anything involving LCD or similar projectors.

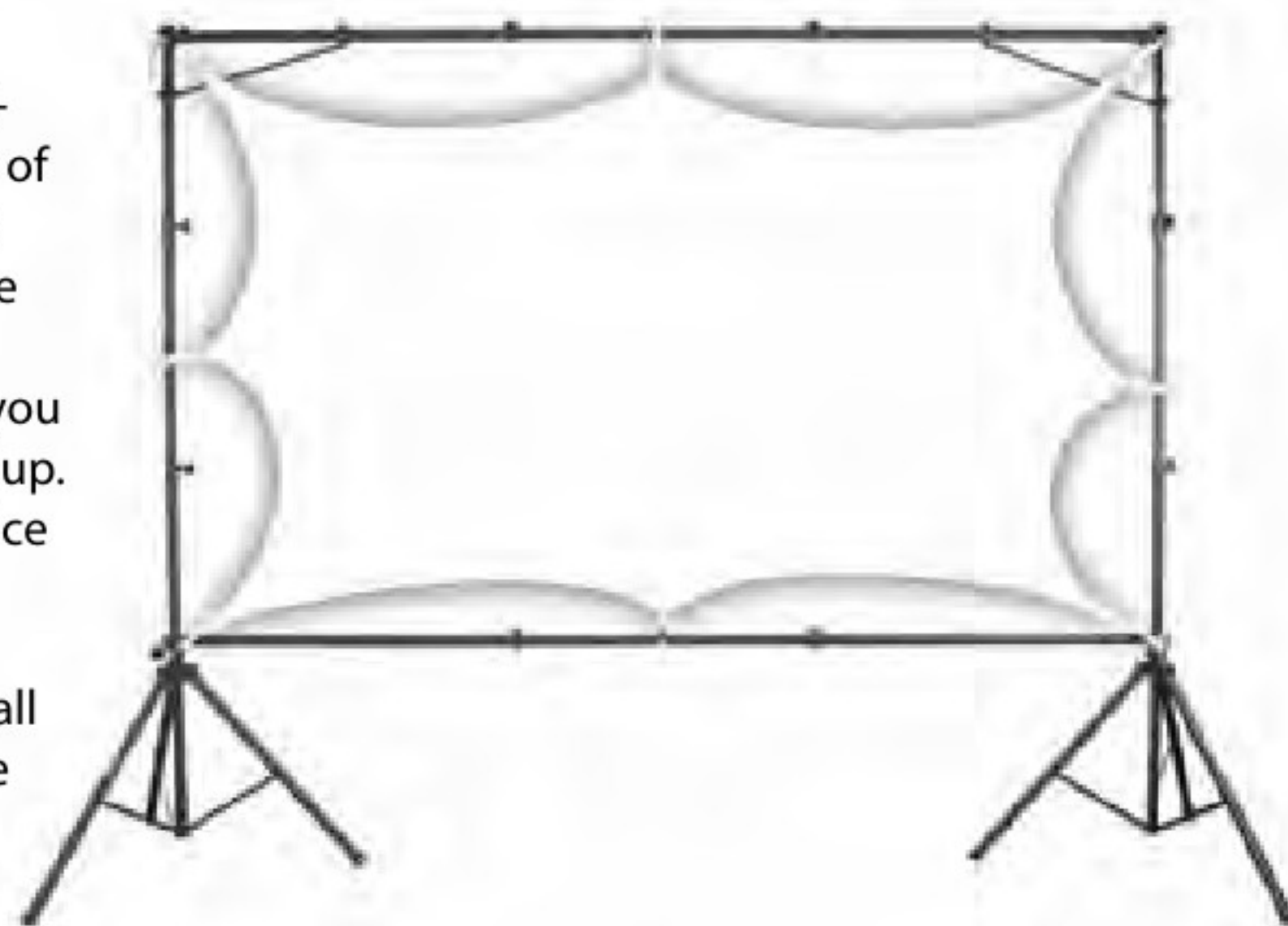
While the pieces are available separately (VSS Mobile Video Screen Frame and VSS Mobile Video Screen), the combination system is what I received for review.

The frame system consists of the two high-reaching tripods that give it a maxi-

mum height of 14 feet and a minimum height of six feet. The width of the system is also adjustable from six to eight feet, with a three-piece crosspiece that bridges the high reaches of the tripods. This gives you a good amount of flexibility of setup. The frame system comes with a nice Odyssey bag for transporting.

The screen provides a very stretchable surface, reinforced at all edges and at the corners. With the supplied tie downs, this surface looks fantastic and can create a useable viewing field of up to 88 inches by 60 inches. While Odyssey pairs it with the frame system to create a great complete solution for projection, the screen can be used with trussing or other types of tripods. It would look good on arch trussing or something similar. The screen also comes with a helpful carrying bag.

Putting it all together for the first time took me about 15 minutes but on future rollouts of the system, I came in just under 10 minutes for fully mounting the screen



and putting up the frame system.

With a list price of \$399.99 you will find the system regularly selling for around \$300. If you are in need of a high-quality but affordable projection surface for your video presentations, check with your local DJ gear dealer about picking up an Odyssey Mobile Video Screen System. Or see it in action on the Mobile Beat Tour or at Mobile Beat Vegas in February 2011. **MB**

www.odysseygear.com

Look, Up in the Rig, It's Super Keyboard!

ODYSSEY TRANSFORMS MILD-MANNERED KEYBOARD INTO AMAZING CONTROL SL

BY BRAD DUNSBERGEN •

As I was sitting down to write this article I wondered how many digital DJs have ever gotten excited about a new keyboard?

Yeah, me neither, but I think the Control SL from Odyssey that is about to change that. This thing has such a cool and wow factor you will want to show this off and be the envy of all your DJ buddies.

Upon opening the package and plugging in the USB cable to my PC (Mac compatible also) the keyboard was recognized immediately and the LEDs lit up. I chose the light blue LED color by hitting the Light On/Off color or select button to scroll through the seven different colored LEDs for backlighting. If you like, the LEDs can be set to a fast changing color mode, but although this was very cool while not using the keyboard, it became a little annoying while actually trying use it.

Another great feature of Control SL is that it can act as a three-port USB hub. This can come in handy if you need to plug in a flash drive or any other USB device. There is also an optional connection for a 5-volt power supply (not included) for those times when you need to plug in a portable hard drive that is powered from the USB port.



Since I have started using the Control SL with our Serato system I have found that I can get more creative with my mixes because all of the shortcuts are laid out on the keyboard. No more trying to remember the shortcuts from memory or from a cheat sheet. Now I just look down

and they are right there in living color. This allows me to be more creative by concentrating on the mix instead of worrying about hitting the correct combination of buttons.

From the first time that I used the Control SL I was in love. I can finally see all my keyboard shortcuts for Serato, as well the regular letter keys, in the dark rooms we usually play in. Even if you don't use one of the Serato DJ programs or Traktor Scratch, the keyboard shortcuts can be mapped to other DJ programs that allow it.

With the Control SL, Odyssey has taken the usually mundane, basic keyboard experience and made it more digital DJ-friendly and visually exciting in one shot. If you are looking to upgrade your digital system with a keyboard boasting super powers, the Control SL is just what the doctor ordered. **MB-**



Zulu Joins the Tribe

ZULU DJ SOFTWARE SOFTWARE FOR WINDOWS AND MAC

BY MICHAEL BUONACCORSO JR.

NCH Software, an Australian software developer with a wide variety of audio (including recording, telephony and dictation), video, utility, and business software, has introduced a DJ mixing program called Zulu, apparently intended to round out its selection of programs for just about any need. All NCH titles are available for both Windows PCs and Macs.

Zulu provides an easy way for beginners to mix music digitally. Whether you're a new DJ just starting out, or a more experienced DJ who is finally going digital, Zulu may just be your entree to the world of computer-based mixing.

With a simple, intuitive interface, Zulu is essentially a step above iTunes, making it a perfect choice for beginners. It supports multi-channel output, allowing you to beat match and cue up songs. As soon as a song is loaded into Zulu, it is analyzed and the BPMs are displayed. It also gives you a waveform of the entire track below the currently playing section, so you can always see exactly where you are in the song.

It also has a "sync" feature. Similar to the capabilities found in higher end programs, it automatically matches the BPMs between songs so you don't have to do it manually. An "auto-play" function also automatically and randomly cues up upcoming songs.

Another strong point of this program is its support for over 30 different musical formats. Whatever specific format you may have your music in, more than likely Zulu will be able to play it.

While Zulu makes it very easy to get up and running as a digital DJ, it lacks a few key features that would make it a truly useful professional tool. Currently, the program does not offer MIDI support. This will be a deal killer for some, as many DJs rely on MIDI controllers or time-coded CDs to perform at their shows. Unfortunately, the only option to control Zulu is using a computer.

Zulu is also missing a search feature, making it nearly impossible to find a song if you have thousands to scroll through. A workaround would be to only import a small number of songs at a time (like an event play list) and use your computer's file manager to search and organize your songs outside the program. Since Zulu is still in beta as far as its development, I'd hope that NCH would add on-board search and MIDI support to complete a professional feature set.

With a \$50 dollar retail price (discounted to \$34.99 at the time of this writing), Zulu is very affordable, and with its easy-to-use interface and cross-platform support, it is an option for anyone looking for an inexpensive alternative to more powerful programs such as Serato or Virtual DJ. **MB**



Technicolor Entertainer

35-YEAR VETERAN DJ STEVE CIE LIGHTS UP HIS CLIENTS' LIVES WITH A PERSONALIZED, TRULY PROFESSIONAL APPROACH

As is often the case with mobile DJs, the artist later to be known as Steve Cie, of Steve Cie Premier Entertainment, got into the mobile game at the urging of others.

In 1974, having been on both AM and FM pirate radio for several years, two friends suggested that he perform at their CB radio organization's New Year's Eve party in Keyport, New Jersey. With the assistance of a friend's 10-inch reel-to-reel tape recorder, along with a pair of old turntables and a Realistic four-channel mixer, he played a mix of oldies and then-current disco music for a crowd of 150 people. We pick up the story with Steve in his own words...

Mobile Beat: Steve, okay...you've admitted that you've used a Radio Shack mixer. Let's just stop right there for a second.

Steve Cie: Oh...yeah.

M B: Well, everybody uses Radio Shack once, I guess.

S C: Okay. Well, the Realistic equipment was probably the most prominent available at the time because DJing was something brand new. There wasn't a lot of equipment available out there at that time.

But in any event, I played in Keyport, New Jersey and it went off very well. I was concerned the party would go well, so I built a 1500-watt color light show using a three-channel color light organ device. And this all came as



Steve Cie, now...

...and then (1982).

a result of the disco craze. People were looking for different effects with lights. So I hung lights in the ceiling; red, blue, and yellow flood lights. And they were synced to the music by use of this three-channel color organ. And it produced patterns on the floor.

I also had a 45-watt strobe light and a mirror ball; and this was, I believe, probably the first mobile light show ever

presented in New Jersey. The audience really liked it, and I actually extended the party two extra hours. And I booked a couple of parties as a result of that. People just hadn't seen a disc jockey come into their home or local hall and do a party. I actually did a couple of weddings in 1975 and the thing started turning out real well for me.

Within two years, I was invited to go on FM radio. And in 1978, The Steve Cie show was born on 89.3 FM radio, WVRN, serving the metropolitan New York City area.

M B: Wow. Has it always just been yourself or do you have other people working for you? What's the personnel mix of Steve Cie Entertainment like?

S C: Well, over the years I've had a number of different people try to come along with me and learn from me. I developed one particular individual who went on to become a good radio personality in southern New Jersey and is now a Department of Transportation spokesperson. I've had a couple of roadies come along; some college kids learn from me. I've always had someone helping all through the years.

In the past two years I've been developing younger talent for my DJ business because I am getting a little older. And if you want to get the Sweet Sixteen market you've got to have some young faces up there behind the console. So I've got a couple of DJs under my wings that I'm showing the ropes, teaching them how to do professional DJ events. There's about four of us right now working together, on and off.

M B: So are you guys primarily in the wedding area? What kinds of events do you personally enjoy doing the most?

S C: Well, we do all kinds of events as a company, but I primarily focus on the Sweet Sixteen and wedding market. Those are the two events that I personally really like doing. In the wedding market, that's where I can show my MC talents best. That's where I really focus my market right now; the last eight or nine years I've been predominantly looking for the wedding business.

M B: Tell us a little bit about your entertainment style...You're right in the thick of millions of weddings every year in the NYC metro area. What distinguishes you from other DJs in the area?

S C: Well, my entertainment style is one which I label "client-specific." I interview my clients. I determine what it is that they would like at their event and what they expect at their event. I can be an energetic and an interactive party-motivating DJ, really high energy; or I can be somewhat laid back, performing a quasi-live radio show, if you will, at your event. I'm blessed to have the gift of a good radio announcer's voice. It's my voice and my ability to read a crowd's taste in music that have been crucial ingredients in my successful career.

M B: How many events do you personally do a year? The company keeps you rather busy, I imagine.

S C: This is a full-time business for me right now. It's been full-time for about nine years. To give you a number, I'd say I'm doing about 55 events a year myself.

I don't book out other DJs doing my events. Every event I turn out to myself. That's one thing that makes me a little bit

different than some of the others. When you book Steve Cie, you get Steve Cie at your event.

M B: How is most of your business coming your way? You have a nice looking website, and we know you've been on the web for a long time. What about Referrals? How do people come knocking on your door?

S C: The bulk of my business is referrals. I've done extensive marketing and social media marketing and it has increased the amount of calls I get. But the true business comes from word-of-mouth referrals.

M B: Okay. Going beyond performing, you have created a new kind of DJ facade, which you call the FaCIEd. Tell us about how that came about.

S C: In an effort to try and make business more professional and looking better, I used a black frontboard for a couple of years and I liked it. But I saw an illuminated frontboard that caught my eye. And I said, lighting has been the linchpin of The Steve Cie Show since its inception in 1975. I said, I've got to doing something like this.

So I went to get what you call an illuminated, or fabric panel light board, for the front of my DJ booth and I couldn't find one that I liked. I couldn't find one built to my standards, which would service me and be portable and mobile enough where I wouldn't have to worry about it breaking when I got there. So I built my own.

I did two or three different versions before I came to the version that I currently build. And a few of my friends with the network that I'm a member of, asked if they could get one, too. And I started building them. And to date, we've got about 45 of these boards out there in the tri-state area and it's become another facet of my business...I try to make disc jockey entertainment a professional industry, and I think this adds and augments that image.

M B: Where can DJs see this unique product online, as well as find out more about you?

S C: For Steve Cie Entertainment, my website is www.stevecie.com. And for the frontboard business, which is now a subsidiary of my entertainment business, it's www.facied.com. We incorporated my stage name in the name of the product, as "FaCIEd."

M B: Where do you see your business going in the future? I mean, do you see yourself 20 years from now still DJing? Working on the next crop of DJs? What do you see happening for you?

S C: My intention is to continue personally DJing at least another 10 years. I'm currently developing some younger talent. I've got three people under the age of 30 working with me right now and I'm hoping to get them to a point where—although I can't clone myself—I'd like them to produce a

show similar to mine, because that's what people in the area here have come to expect.

My business has increased to cover five states. I've got people who call me for repeat business in all five states. They know what they're going to get with me. I'm a little bit different than the other DJ, and that's what you need to be in entertainment. You have to have something about you that separates you from the others. One DJ or another is not better or worse than the other. They're just slightly more unique with something they do.

And it's my hope that the Steve Cie Entertainment business will continue at least another 20, 25 years; and again, with myself personally DJing, at least another decade.

M B: For someone who won't get the pleasure of meeting Steve Cie in person one of the national conferences or one of the MB Tour's New Jersey stops, how would you describe yourself? What else do you want people to know about you?

S C: Well, my personal goals include helping the next generations of DJs become more professional. I've started devot-



ing a lot of time to expos, conferences, and network meetings. I want the industry to achieve the professional recognition that it rightly deserved...One way to accomplish this is to get DJs to produce shows rather than just show up and play music. Put a presentation on in one form or another, whether it's lighting, video presentation, multimedia, what have you; and to behave, dress, and present themselves in a professional manner. And that's what I want people to remember about me, that I'm trying to facilitate that and helping the next generation of DJs to come up with this.

My mantra is "complete customer satisfaction with professional, personal, client-specific DJ entertainment." And that's what I want to see happen out there... **MB**

Big Sound, Tightly Packed

E-V'S ZXA1 ACTIVE SPEAKERS PROVIDE A LARGER AUDIO EXPERIENCE FOR SMALLER-SCALE EVENTS

BY JIM WEISZ



Weighing in at just 19 pounds, E-V's new ZXA1 speakers pack a nice punch in a pretty small package. With just 8-inch woofers, the ZXA1's make my current EV SX300 speakers, look like giants when placed side-by-side. But, when comparing the sound, the ZXA1 speakers defied the differences you would logically expect between larger and smaller speakers.

The ZXA1 was announced this past January at the Winter NAMM convention in Anaheim. The ZXA1 is basically the powered version of the ZX1 that Electro-Voice released about three years ago. If you compare the specs of the powered vs. unpowered version of this speaker, something that really stands out is the weight—it's nearly IDENTICAL for each cabinet. According to the specs from E-V, the powered version only weighs about a half pound more than the unpowered. This fact is sure to make the powered cabinets appealing to weight-conscious mobile DJs

The ZXA1 is powered by an 800-watt amp module that is derived from the popular E-V Tour Grade amp series, and like the ZXI also has a 90° by 50° coverage pattern. Using that built-in 800 watt amp, the ZXA1 can reach a maximum SPL of 123dB.

Taking a look at the back of the speaker, there are connections for line in, master out and mic in. There are also

two knobs for master gain and mic gain. Finally, there's also a button you can toggle to run the speakers in full range or with subs, which takes advantage of an integrated high-pass filter.

DEVELOPING A JOB DESCRIPTION

I was really excited to try these speakers out after reading all the hype on the DJ message boards. I enjoyed reading the debates about what DJs thought would be an acceptable use for these speakers; some said small parties and weddings, while others said only as monitors or possibly for wedding ceremonies. So, I was curious to see where my test pair would end up.

I brought the ZXA1's out to a couple of weddings to see what they could do. The plan for the first wedding was to do an A/B test between my amplified SX300's and the ZXA1's. The first wedding had about 120 guests and was held in a small to medium sized room in a country club.

My initial reaction when running the ZXA1's was complete surprise. I've come to expect good things from E-V but I was very impressed with what this little 8-inch cabinet was putting out: crisp, clear highs, good mids and decent lows. I say decent lows because you can't expect to have chest-pounding thump from an 8-inch woofer—the laws of physics dictate that it just isn't going to happen.

With my wedding starting soon, I reluctantly powered down the ZXA1's and put them away. I say reluctantly because if this wedding had been in just a little smaller room I would've used them for the entire reception.

After my first test of these speakers, I was looking forward to seeing how they would perform at the following weekend's wedding ceremony. I knew the venue for this wedding was pretty small (essentially the main dining room of a B&B) and there would be less than 100 guests, so I had thoughts of running the ZXA1's for both the ceremony and reception. I even left the SX's in my truck. Once I saw where I'd be set-up, I knew the ZXA1 speakers would be more than sufficient for both the ceremony and reception.

For the ceremony, I plugged a lavalier wireless mic into the back of the speaker rather than into my regular mixer. While I would normally prefer to run the mic through a mixer, I'd have no problem running a mic directly through ZXA1. The sound quality was very good and I was able to easily control the gain of the mic from the back of the speaker.

I really liked using these cabinets for the ceremony since it made everything so easy. Given their size they were quick to set up and tear down. The ceremony system I used for this wedding consisted of one ZXA1, a single-space mixer and my laptop. It took about ten minutes to set up and five minutes to tear down, which is great for a single DJ trying to handle both the ceremony and reception.

For the reception, I had both ZXA1 speakers running and they performed quite well. At no point did I feel that I needed more power. Since I ran them without a sub, I could've used a bit more low end, but all-in-all I was very pleased with their overall sound. For small wedding receptions like this one (remember, small room, less than 100 guests), these speakers are an excellent choice.

I'VE GOT THE POWER

I've personally never owned powered speakers but these speakers really made me reconsider using powered speakers for my main sound system. I currently have my amp in my main rack, which weighs about 75 pounds total, including my 21-pound amp. If I could shed the amp from my rack and pick up a couple of powered speakers that would be a nice trade-off.

While the ZXA1 probably isn't going to be the main speaker for a mobile DJ, it can certainly complement your other speakers very nicely. In addition to the ZXA1, E-V also has the ZXA5, which is a powered 15-inch speaker. I think it would be great to own both the ZXA1 and ZXA5; that way you're covered for both large and small events. On top of that, you'd also have a fantastic ceremony system, too. Hopefully E-V will complete the ZXA line by adding 10 and 12-inch models, so DJs have a wide variety of options to choose from based on their needs.

I think these speakers would be great for a lot of mobile DJs. I would have no problem at all using them for birthday parties, anniversaries, block parties and wedding ceremonies. Even small wedding receptions would be possible, as my experience showed. All in all, the ZXA1 is a small speaker with a sound much bigger than you'd expect. **MB**

www.electro-voice.com

Toe the Line Online

THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

BY JIM WEISZ •

Fight it all you want, but it's the 21st century... which means most 20-somethings would prefer to contact someone via e-mail or text. Sure, nothing beats giving an old friend a call to catch-up, but when you're talking about business, it's all about electronic communication—text, e-mail, Facebook, and Twitter. So what does that mean for your company? To put it bluntly, you will either need to adapt or you will be left behind.

QUICK (AND PROFESSIONAL) CORRESPONDENCE

How long does it usually take you to respond to a prospective client's e-mail? An hour? A day? Two days? The answer could be the difference in getting the booking.

Let's say a bride e-mails you Monday morning. You respond Tuesday morning. Generally, one business day is a good response time. However, the bride had a DJ e-mail her back Monday afternoon and she already set-up a meeting with him. That's not to say she won't meet with you too, but she might just delete your e-mail response because she's interested in the other DJ.

So does that mean the first to respond will always get the booking? Definitely not. But, if the first to respond sends a concise, well-written e-mail, it could be enough to get a meeting to secure the booking. That means you'll want to be sure your e-mail response is an accurate representation of your company. You should have a standard e-mail response ready to go for all leads. Whether you have that already or not, use this opportunity to write a new e-mail.

When drafting your response for leads, remember to keep it concise—a couple of short paragraphs at the most. This is just an introduction to you and your company. You want to pique the prospective client's interest so they will want to move further with you. And although it is essentially a "form letter" it still needs to sound personal and not like the boilerplate language we've all experienced in junkmail.

After you've written the e-mail, print it out and put it on your desk to read the next day. Read it out loud to see how it sounds. Once you've made all changes, send it to a couple colleagues who will honestly critique it for you. Finally, save it as a draft in your e-mail so it's ready to go when a lead comes in.

BE COURTEOUS: SEND A RESPONSE!

It's Friday at 3 PM. You have a wedding tomorrow, so you're wrapped up in getting everything ready for that. You see an e-mail come in from a prospective bride for a wedding in a few months. You take a quick look at your calendar and see you're booked. So, you delete the e-mail and go back to what you were doing.

Do you like it when YOU contact a business for something and you never hear back? Probably not. So why do that to someone else? You don't need to respond that minute, but respond in a reasonable amount of time (1-2 business days) to let the prospective client know you are booked. More than likely it won't result in a booking for that client (although, I have had clients move a private party to accommodate my schedule, so that COULD happen) but it could lead to a referral. If that prospective client wanted to book you, she might refer you to friends and say something like 'I wish XYZ DJ was available for my wedding but he wasn't. He sent me a nice e-mail reply to let me know he was booked already. Maybe he's still available for your wedding.' It's certainly a scenario that could happen.

BUT ALL THEY WANT IS A PRICE

There are varying views in the DJ industry in regards to posting prices on your website, using an automated quote generator, giving price over e-mail or giving a price on the phone. Some DJs will just not give a price unless it's in person. I'm not going to argue what approach is right (I don't think there is one right way), all I'll say is at least take a moment to respond so you can set up a call or meeting (or whatever you prefer before giving a price). If they persist and say they will not meet or set up a phone call without a price, it's up to you at that point to decide how to handle it. You obviously have a reason for your approach so explain it to the prospective client and try to help them understand the reasoning behind your preference.

If you are someone who will give them a price via e-mail, be sure to give a call to action in your price quote e-mail. It doesn't have to be a hard sell, but you should close the e-mail asking how they would like to proceed. Would they like to set up a

phone call, or an in-person meeting?

HOW FAR WILL YOU ROLL WITH IT?

Most people have a preference either for e-mail or talking on the phone. If yours is talking on the phone, you may find you'll need



to adjust your preference to match your clients. If you are a wedding DJ, there's a good chance you're hearing from a bride who is at work. So, e-mail is easiest for her since it's convenient and discrete. With e-mail, her co-workers, and more importantly, her boss, won't know she is planning her wedding on company time.

If you prefer talking on the phone, you can keep the e-mails concise and recommend a phone call at a time convenient for her. But, if she says e-mail is best for her, then you need to either respect the prospective client's wishes or possibly lose the booking. For many people, communicating electronically means a lot less pressure, especially in a purchasing situation. She might feel more comfortable asking questions via e-mail that she wouldn't feel comfortable asking on the phone or in person.

Consider my experience. When I meet someone in person, I book almost all the time (I would venture to say over 95% of the time). When I talk to someone on the phone, the percentage drops to maybe 80%. Finally when I'm limited to e-mail with someone the percentage is drastically lower—maybe 10%. Why such a huge drop? It's a lot easier to send a bunch of e-mails to some DJs to get a price and book just on that. So unfortunately there are a lot of price shoppers who will e-mail you. So does that mean you should ignore e-mail, or not spend as much time with it? I don't think so. I've booked numerous events—including weddings—100% over e-mail. I've also booked many events that started with some e-mail correspondence and turned into a meeting.

I'm sure many DJs think it's crazy that a bride would book a DJ without meeting him, let alone not talking to him. However, I

tend to think these brides are the ones who spend more time on my website, reading about my style and my background to get a feel for me. Then after a few e-mails, they feel comfortable booking. E-mail bookings are far from my most successful booking method, but I would've lost out on numerous bookings if I had told the bride I would need to have a phone or in-person consultation to give more information or a price. I would estimate I've booked at least 10 weddings over the years completely on e-mail, without ever speaking to the client. That was their preference and I went with it.

The only thing I won't do via e-mail is the pre-wedding consultation, which I either do on a phone call or in person. There are just too many details that it is so much faster, and easier, to go over everything verbally. I've never had any of my clients who prefer e-mail have an issue with that. **MB**

Jim Weisz has been a DJ since 1999, primarily serving the wedding and school dance markets. Originally from Chicago, where he had a thriving DJ business, he relocated to Dallas in 2003 to take a position with TM Studios (formerly JonesTM & TM Century). Once there, he used the web effectively to re-establish his client base within a just a few months. Jim is also a convention speaker and contributes a more frequent version of this column to MobileBeat.com. He can be reached at jim@discoverydjs.com.



Site Inspection

In each issue I chose from websites submitted for review. If you would like your website to be considered for review in a future issue of Mobile Beat, send an e-mail to jim@discoverydjs.com. The website for this issue is www.djkevinrussell.com.

GOOD:

- Integration of Twitter feed and links to Facebook and Twitter pages.
- Excellent bio. Gives prospective clients a glimpse into you as a person vs. just as a DJ.
- Good testimonials page. The dates are a nice feature.

SUGGESTIONS:

- There is almost no text on the home page. Not only will that hurt you from a search engine positioning standpoint but it also doesn't provide anything to draw the prospective client in.
- On the home page you should have the primary cities you target for your business.
- Remove the lighting and sound page. If you want to talk about your gear, include some brief information on your bio page. Also, all those pictures are very

grainy, so if you want to use one or two of them elsewhere on the website, take some new pictures.

- When I went to the photos page I was expecting to see pictures from your events. I don't think you need a whole page of pictures of you with celebrities. If you'd like, include one or two of them on your bio page.
- You have 11 different buttons for the different pages on your website. Most people will go to just a couple of those pages. So, you might want to combine a few of those pages, as well as drop some unnecessary content to tighten it up a little.
- You don't have any calls to action on your website. Give them a reason to contact you.
- The font on most pages looks to be size 14-16. I would recommend size 10-12.
- More pictures! The only pictures on the website are you with celebrities and your gear. How about some recent brides and grooms or people dancing at your events, etc.?

WRAP-UP

You're off to a good start. You have some good content but you also have a lot of



content that does not serve any purpose. Also, while I've certainly seen a lot worse websites, you can definitely tell it is home made. What type of client are you going for? What type of show do you offer? It seems like you focus on weddings. If that's the case, you should definitely look into a having a professional design a website for you that is geared toward your demographic. Looking at your website, it seems like you're marketing to males, when in fact you are marketing to females. I think you would do very well with a new, fresh, professionally designed website that was built with women ages 21-30 in mind. (By the way, I love the billboard...very cool!)

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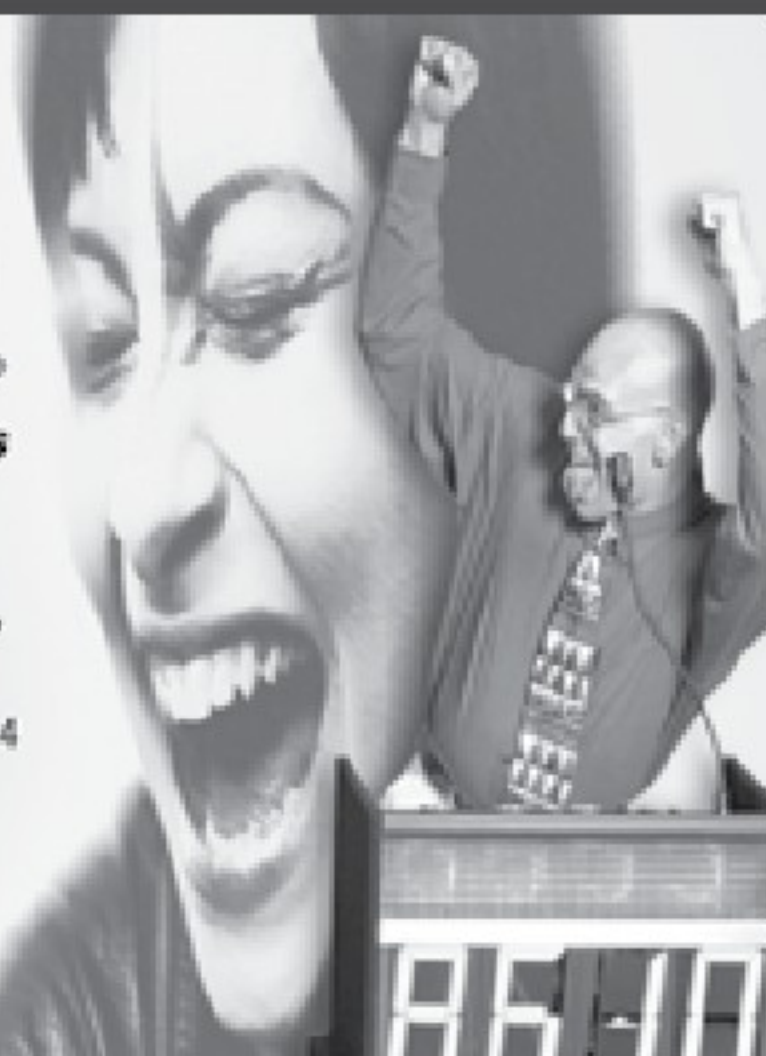
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Not-So-Sweet Sixteen

THERE COMES A TIME TO REEVALUATE SOME OF YOUR AGE-RELATED GIG POSSIBILITIES

BY MARK JOHNSON •



Don't get me wrong. I used to enjoy Sweet Sixteen parties. They are miniature versions of school dances with the requisite 80% current hits with the balance made up of the standard DJ songs that make up the Mobile Beat 200. Instead of 200 kids in a gym or cafeteria, you had 30-40 kids on a local rental hall with 90% of them being girls.

A funny thing has happened over the years. As I got older, it seems that the girls of the Sweet Sixteen parties did not get older. Rather, they appear to be the same age every year and the age difference between me and them is increasing.

As the resident curmudgeon for Mobile Beat, I will review Sweet Sixteen parties from the perspective of a 52-year-old male. While many MB readers may be younger than I am, I'm sure that there are plenty of seasoned veterans that may feel the same way that I do.

First, at some point there comes the 'eeew' factor. I have two boys, aged 23 and 19 and during the last seven years of their girlfriend involvement, I have become more "parental" than buddy-buddy with them and their peers. As I've watched them and their friends grow up, both mentally, emotionally and physically, some lines have gotten drawn regarding what is considered appropriate behavior.

I can imagine some hot-shot 25-year-old DJ getting more involved with his audience during a Sweet Sixteen party. There is the cool factor with his clothes and sunglasses as well as the hunk factor that he could offer with his physical actions. Without announcing that he is nine years older than his audience, he could blend in and party with them.

As I've gotten older, I've developed a discipline of behavior that upon any analysis would not appear at all inappropriate. But that does come at the expense of the fun factor that Mr. 25-Year-Old could offer without anyone raising an eyebrow.

So there exists a greater threat that I could run into that exceeds the value that I may get from the party. I don't need a phone call or nasty letter coming from the parent of a distraught girl thinking that I offended her in some manner. I've had one or two from school administrators for playing inappropriate songs at school dances ("Mony Mony" and "Only The Good Die Young" if you must know), which causes me to put my guard up. If lyrics like those offended someone back then, then imagine some parent jumping on my back for playing some of today's music in front of their precious darlings.

Despite today's music being available to the girls in other forms, schools and Sweet Sixteen parents can now pin the demise of our civilization on some errant DJ playing these songs, leaving us to take the heat. No thanks. As a 52-year-old male, I don't need to be on the receiving end of a 16-year-old girl's complaint. Enough said.

Musically, songs for a Sweet Sixteen party take on the same transient nature that I've already expressed in earlier articles. I just had an inquiry for a Sweet Sixteen party (I've given them up, along with school dances, for the last 5 years) and I tried to convert it from a DJ party to a non-DJ jukebox party. They still wanted a live DJ so I responded with my actual reason for declining. I told the mommy "I don't want to put my finger in a vice and have three dozen girls play "name that tune" with me and then get to turn the handle with every wrong answer".

Whereas a school dance would have the larger number of students, making it possible to ignore requests, the focused 30 kids at a Sweet Sixteen party would give me much less of a chance to blame disliked song requests on others.

If you factor in the MTV show My Super Sweet Sixteen (MSSS), the bar has been raised even further. Now, instead of some \$1,000 party at the local VFW or fire hall (room, food, beverages and the DJ), the girlyies now want these miniature weddings complete with all the splendor. Short of customized matches and napkins, the amount of peripheral expenses makes me happy I have two sons.

The expectations are higher, in that MSSS always shows some elaborate facility, limousines, tuxedos, a few hundred BFF's, a table full of presents that would make a prince blush, and a DJ that looks like he's overdosed on Red Bull. All of which costs as much as a normal person's yearly salary.

Even the lower-rent Sweet Sixteen parties that I've done at the local VFW's have taken an upturn. Until my voluntary retirement from these parties a few years ago, I noticed a 'keeping up with the Jones' effect. It seems that the same group of girlyies would all have consecutive Sweet Sixteen parties and each would try to top those prior.

I only did one Sweet Sixteen party that had the candle ceremony. My sons have been to their share of their contemporary's Sweet Sixteen parties and have bemoaned the exaggerated emotional raffle where everyone waits to see whose name is called next. They were actually thankful that their name wasn't called to be some psychological building block of this girlyie's world.

In closing, I used to have a good time with Sweet Sixteen parties, but now it's time to hang up that demographic and focus on more age-appropriate parties. Too bad there are no Sweet Sixty parties. **MB**

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